Conquest
By Ideas-Guy

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Chapter 1

"You are amongst the last of our noble species, Galick," A hologram told me, and wasn't that a sight to see as a yawn ripped from my throat. There were a lot of things wrong at the moment, but most of them were shoved beneath the haze of sleep that I hadn't quite shaken off. "You, and the few others like you, are all that remains of the Saiyan race. But fear not, child. Warrior blood flows through your veins, and yours is a legacy that stretches back a thousand years to the first tribal leaders to rise to prominence when our kind first landed on Planet Plant."

I rubbed gunk from my eye and blinked away the haze, and it was only then that something like alarm started to echo in the back of my mind. For one, I wasn't in my bed. Secondly, I was in a small pod thing with a window directly in front of me, hurtling through space to a planet that I don't think is Earth.

"Much as our ancestors of old, you will arrive on this planet a refugee, but you shall be dominant. You will conquer this world, and it shall only be the first of many." The hologram continued, and now that I got a look at him…

"Vegeta?" I muttered, and of all things, that's what cast off the last vestiges of sleep. There was no mistaking that hairline. Or that hairstyle that effortlessly defied gravity. The hologram was of Vegeta, wearing some weird-looking armor, a cape, with a weird emblem on his chest. Then I blinked -- no. Not Vegeta. King Vegeta, his dad. He was the one with the goatee in the anime.

"This Attack Ball possesses all that you need to accomplish your mission. The history of our people, techniques that allowed our people to carve an empire across the stars, as well as knowledge of our most hated enemies," King Vegeta continued before he made a dramatic gesture, sending his cape dancing out. "Your mission parameters are simple -- conquer this planet, and others. Do whatever it takes to reforge the Saiyan Empire. Eventually, you shall encounter other remnants of our race. Conquer them as well. Let the mightiest of you charter the course for the Saiyan's future, as it should be."

There's a whole lot to unpack there, but my attention was stolen by the planet fast approaching me, and I had no idea how to operate the brakes. My eyes darted around for something that would make the ship slow down even as the window became obscured by flames licking at the surface of the ship. Yet, even as it raced through reentry into the planet's atmosphere the ship didn't so much as shudder. If I weren't looking out the window, I'd never know I was blazing towards

the ground at hundreds of miles an hour.
"This is the last order your Emperor gives you, Warrior Galick," King- or Emperor Vegeta, I guess, finished before the hologram winked out, and I found myself alone in the spaceship. My body grew tense as I held on, looking at what looked like a GPS system that gave me a countdown until-
I hit the dirt, and I barely felt it. It felt more like a car hitting a speed bump rather than a ship slamming into a planet like a meteor. I wasn't dead. That was a good sign, at least. The ship stilled, and there was a hiss of air as the door to the ship popped open, revealing a massive crater that the ship sat in the bottom of.
Uncertain what to do, I stepped outside to find that the bedrock was steaming with heat from the impact. It didn't bother my feet as I stepped outside, waving a hand before my face to get rid of the dust. Slowly, uncertainly, I climbed out of the crater to see…
A forest.
"Dude… I'm on an alien planet and the first thing I see are normal ass trees?" I muttered, feeling a little cheated. Normal ass grass, normal ass dirt, and normal ass trees with normal ass leaves. What an absolute let down. Where were the aliens- or natives, since I guess I'm the alien in this scenario? A familiar kind of alien at that. Looking down at myself, I saw it -- a fury brown tail was tied around my waist. It took a little effort, but I could wiggle it a bit. It felt like I gained an extra arm or something.
I looked down at it, then at the rest of me. I was fitter than fit with heavily defined muscles, all the way down to an eight-pack. Kinda wild. The same kind of weird armor that Emperor Vegeta wore was on me -- a black undersuit that covered me up to the neck and ended mid-forearm, a partitioned skirt thing that ended mid-thigh to avoid restricting my movement, and a pair of dark blue armored boots that came up to my knees.
What was more notable was that the armor looked like it had seen some use. Heavy use. It seemed to be cosmetic damage, as I didn't feel injured.
I wasn't an infiltration baby, at least. I don't know if I could have put up with looking like a child for the better part of fifteen years like Goku had. Instead, I had the body of a… teenager, if I had to guess. So, I had definitely evicted someone from their body, huh?
"What in the hell is going on?" I asked no one in particular, looking up before I saw that someone had heard the question anyway. My heart stilled when I saw a toe- a big toe.
Big as in the size of the entirety of my body kind of big. It was peaking out from behind a tree some couple of dozen feet away, and I slowly looked up to meet the gaze of a massive, fifty-foot-tall man staring at

me from behind the tree.
The guy was straight up leering at me with one eye peeking out, hiding most of his face, and he wasn't blinking.
Okay.
I think I'm going to go back to bed and start this entire day over.
I didn't turn around, but I slowly took a step back. Then another. And another. I was thoroughly discouraged when the fifty-foot man emerged from behind the tree and, in doing so, revealed that he wasn't exactly a he because he was as smooth as a Ken doll down there. 'He' moved to a tree that was a bit closer to me, but still hid behind it and leered at me like we weren't making eye contact.
"How about you back off?" I said, making a shooing gesture at him as something about his appearance tickled the back of my brain. My head still felt like it was full of cotton, my thoughts were slow and sluggish, but there was something about the guy being fifty foot tall and lacking a dick or any clothes to hide that fact that told me I should recognize him.
In response, the big guy darted to another tree and hid behind it. He waited a second… then, sure enough, he peeked from the tree and continued to stare at me.
I think I'm going to have to fight this guy. The thought sent a surge of adrenaline through me, and there was an itch in my blood that needed to be scratched. Far from being daunted at the prospect of fighting a fifty-foot-tall man, I was excited. The same kind of excitement you felt when you were a kid and heard the song of an ice cream truck and had some cash in your pocket.
Before I was even really aware of what I was doing, I moved with the boundless joy of a child who just couldn't stand still. There had to be at least a hundred yards between us, but it felt like I crossed it barely a second before I jumped up, effortlessly clearing the world record for the pole vault, and used the surface of a tree to send myself further up and at the creeper.
The big guy was big, and he was fast, but he felt slow. An utterly oversized hand lunged to grab me from midair, and for a split second, his palm was all I could see. Yet, even as my heart lurched in my chest, my body reacted on instinct. I flipped in the air, landing lightly on his palm, and before he could close his grip, I darted between his fingers to run up his arm.
Cocking back a fist, I found my lips parting in a feral grin as I planted the fist against his nose with enough force to not only snap his head back and send him flying a good dozen feet, but to leave the entirety of his skull smashed in. The creature slammed into a tree, toppling it over as he crashed through it and lay on the ground.
Not dead. Even as steam erupted from his shattered face, the creature

was getting up.
"A titan," I realized, blinking in surprise as the pieces finally clicked into place. "Attack on Titan?" I continued, tilting my head. I was a Saiyan in Attack on Titan? Those felt like two extremely different settings to cross. Attack on Titan was a gritty dark anime about the nature of people and war. Dragonball was a gag shonen turned battle shonen setting where stuff like blowing up the moon was done casually.
Wait. I was a Saiyan. So… ki?
As the titan rose to his feet, I looked inward, and it honestly only took a second to find what I was looking for. I'm not sure if I had ki as a human, but as a Saiyan, it felt like there was an entire ocean of it inside me, and controlling it felt as natural as breathing. A bead of ki flickered to life in the palm of my hand, and it began to grow.
I had no idea how powerful it was. Not until I thrust my hand forward and energy erupted from my hand like a cannon. Dark blue ki enveloped the titan from the knees up, vaporizing him, and the trees behind him. And the trees behind them. And the ones behind them. Eventually, I could see the ki blast punching through the clouds before it finally lost its energy.
The giant legs fell over after a split second before evaporating into nothing, leaving only the scorched trees as proof of what I had done. I looked at the destruction, then down at my palm, realizing that I probably just casually threw the equivalent of a nuke. No, more than that. I think if I had put just a little more oomph into it, then that was a 'blow up the moon' tier attack.
That was mildly alarming.
"Okay, what in the actual hell is going on?" I asked, shaking my head to get rid of that cotton feeling. It wasn't actually sleepiness, I don't think. Didn't Saiyans hibernate during space travel? So, I had some kind of drug in me, slowing everything down and making everything feel less real. But it was. I got the isekai treatment, somehow, and I really needed to get a handle on what was actually going on.
Heading back to my spaceship, I searched through it more thoroughly now that I wasn't distracted by the whole… 'alien planet' thing. I soon found a number of things that I had missed before in a little compartment beneath the seat that I had woken up on.
There were a couple of odd crystal things inside, but I had no idea what they were, so I instead focused on the scouter. It looked a bit like an ear muff with a piece of red glass jutting out from it. Pressing it to my ear, it stayed there while it took a quick second to boot up with scrolling text before my eye.
There were a couple of options written in a language I didn't recognize, yet somehow understood. Selecting the option for a general scan, I blinked in amazement as in the span of about five seconds, the scouter

scanned the entirety of the planet.
The highest power level was 72pl. Not only that, it gave me directions to the highest power levels, but it directed me towards clusters of them.
Doing a self-scan, however, revealed my power level -- 1,574pl.
There was nothing on the planet that had a chance of challenging me. And, I'm guessing that was the entire point. Apparently, the Saiyan race had been taken out behind the barn, and this was some sort of attempt to keep it alive. So, the Saiyan leadership teed up a weak planet for me to conquer. Further searching the ship revealed that there was more data on the hologram projector.
A lot more data. It was organized into various folders, some of which were restricted until I reached certain power levels. But, from what I could access, I found a lot of interesting stuff. Including an up-to-date map of the planet that I was on… which was just Earth flipped upside down. But bigger?
"Threat ranking: point one," I muttered, looking over the data. "Primitive projectile weaponry, no space program to speak of, with no satellite technology. Notable for the 'Eldian' subspecies for potential as disposable shock troops due to 'Titan' transformation," I read the short report on the planet that I was on. It was way more in-depth than I was expecting, and everything seemed to line up with what I knew of the setting.
The planet wasn't chosen at random -- that was for sure. They even had plans for how to conquer it, though those mostly consisted of blowing up the major population centers and holding the rest hostage.
I also found the techniques that Emperor Vegeta mentioned. Most of the good stuff was locked behind some power level requirements, but there was stuff readily available to me, like flying and ki blasts. More interestingly, however, was technology.
They essentially gave me an entire tech tree for everything I would need to turn this rock into a civilization able to reach the stars. There was a lot in here. A frankly overwhelming amount as I came face to face with technology that was firmly in the sci-fi genre.
Terraforming tech. FTL drives. Healing fluid that could not only heal any injury short of death, but also somehow worked on every species of alien the Saiyans had encountered. Blueprints for mass drivers, space elevators, anti-gravity technology…
I breathed in deeply, shutting down the hologram and taking a moment to think. It still didn't exactly feel real to me at the moment. And I think that might have influenced my thoughts.
"Eh, why not?" I asked myself, really considering it. I knew Attack on Titan pretty well. Honestly, even if I went with the recommendation of blowing up a couple cities, the death toll would be a fraction of what

Eren had inflicted upon the world in the series. I couldn't exactly do much worse than the stations of canon, which saw eighty percent of the world population trampled to death in the Rumbling. Not without outright wiping everything out at least. But I knew all the twists and turns of the plot -- from the wider world, to Eren's ability to send his memories to the past, to who the major players were…
I scratched at my cheek, giving it a little more thought. I didn't particularly care about the whole 'Saiyan Empire' thing. Kinda hard to feel any attachment to something you only learned existed ten minutes ago. But the idea of conquering a planet?
It sounded fun.
How all of this happened was puzzling, but I was more powerful than I thought possible. Conquering a planet wasn't just possible, I genuinely couldn't think of a way for the people of Attack on Titan to stop me from doing it. The Titan Shifters? The nine of them in total? My scouter had them clocked already, and what could they realistically do to me? In the very first chapter of Dragon Ball Goku got shot a half dozen times by Bulma and barely felt it before throwing her car with her still in it.
And he'd been a kid at the time. A particularly weak one by Saiyan standards.
Really, what was stopping me from just taking the place over? Morals? I'm not even sure this was real, and it wasn't like I was beholden to my morals in a dream of all things. But, even if I wasn't dreaming… was that a reason not to do it? The idea of conquering an entire planet like a run-of-the-mill power fantasy…
And wasn't the point of the isekai experience to be a self-indulgent power fantasy?
…
It took me a couple of hours to get acquainted with my new body, and in that time, the hibernation drugs were slowly flushed from my system. I wouldn't exactly call myself an expert on ki yet, but those quick few hours had been enough for me to get a handle on the basics. Such as flight, which I found that I was quickly falling in love with.
My hair was ruffled by the air as I followed the scouter's directions. My Attack Ball was resting on my shoulder, propped up with a hand. I took it with me because it didn't seem like a good idea to leave it behind, considering all the info stored inside it and the entrance I had made with my arrival. I doubted there was anything on the planet that could damage it, but I still didn't want anyone stumbling over it.
That, and I had a use for it in mind.
"I landed on Paradis, huh? I wonder if that was on purpose?" I asked myself, first seeing the massive walls that emerged from the ground. They stood at around a hundred and fifty feet tall, made out of what

looked like solid gray stone. Most of the wall stretched across the horizon for as far as the eye could see, though there was a gentle but noticeable curve to it.
I had also landed at an interesting time, I noticed, as thick black pillars of smoke rose up from one of the outcroppings of the wall. One of the poor districts, I think. So, either I was arriving at the very start of the series with the fall of Shiganshina, or I was arriving at the attack of Trost, and I had landed somewhere between… Wall Maria and Rose? Couldn't remember the specifics, sadly, but that sounded about right. From above, I could see the tide of titans that were venturing forth towards an opening in the wall. As well as the cannons that were going off one after another, trying to stem that tide to little avail. I flew high above and fast to make sure that I arrived undetected, and within a minute, I had arrived at my destination.
"Alright, where are the shifters?" I asked, doing another quick scan. Sure enough, five of them were inside the district. Which would be… Ymir, the Jaw Titan. Bertholdt, the Colossal Titan. Reiner, the Armored Titan. Annie, the Female Titan. And, lastly, our protagonist, Eren Yeager, the Attack Titan and Founder Titan.
The scene was vaguely familiar to me -- the marble buildings with orangish clay tiled roofs, all of them nestled tightly together in the small district. The gate, which was meant to serve as the barrier keeping out the titans had been smashed inward. And, a quick glance at it revealed the defenses set up around it -- the pits that had a handful of titans inside, trying to get out, or the large wooden towers meant to catch debris.
Meaning that this was Trost.
I searched my memories of Trost for anything prudent. There were a handful of things. The rookies are stranded on roofs because they didn't get a resupply, which came from the giant castle-looking thing near the center of the district. Eren got his squad slaughtered because he recklessly charged an 'abnormal' titan. Which would lead to his first shift into the Attack Titan…
With a quick look, I saw that the castle-looking thing was still besieged by titans. So, at the very least, Eren hadn't slaughtered them yet. Meaning that this was before he had been revealed as a shifter.
The average titan was around 25pl according to my scouter. The titan shifters, which were the nine strongest power levels on the planet, ranging from 50pl to 70pl. With the strongest, I'm guessing, being the Colossal Titan by sheer size. From what I remember, Annie, Reiner, and Bertholdt were grouped up, pretending to be stranded along with the other cadets. I can't remember what Ymir was doing at that time, but it meant that one of the two other highest power levels was…
"There you are," I remarked, flying down towards the smoldering city

while gray clouds gathered overhead, shifting the Attack Ball in my grasp. I found exactly who I was looking for as he wandered through the streets at random. The Attack Titan -- Eren Yeager, who was unconscious and acting on pure instinct.
The Attack Titan looked different from the other titans. No lips to speak of, only a row of teeth. His ears tapered off into points while his dark hair was a shaggy mess. Unlike the oddly shaped titans or the ones who look like a dad complete with beer gut, he was well-muscled. Eren was inside, acting only on his desire to kill titans, so he moved with a sense of purpose.
"Hm," I hummed, ki flowing over my hand, and I shaped it to look like a rough blade. I gave it a moment of thought -- sticking to the stations of canon, at least for a time, to use my metaknowledge to get a handle on things. If I had been reborn as a human, I might have done exactly that. But, I hadn't been.
I was a Saiyan. There was nothing on this planet that could earnestly challenge me. I didn't need to nudge the rails of canon to go my way. Not when I could pick up the train itself and fly it wherever I wanted.
"Sorry, Eren. But your ability to time loop or whatever the fuck is too much of a pain in the ass to put up with," I told him, setting my Attack Ball on a rooftop before diving in. With two quick slashing motions, I cut upward along the nape of the titan's neck, my rough ki blade easily cutting through flesh and muscle to reveal the pilot of the meat mech. Eren plopped out of the titan, his severed arms and legs steaming as I ripped his face away from the connection point. His shaggy brown hair was a mess, various fluids staining his uniform, which I carried him by. His titan body immediately flopped forward bonelessly, rapidly evaporating, while I carried Eren to my spaceship.
Eren Yeager
Former Protagonist of Attack on Titan.
I felt a bit bad about it, honestly. I rather liked Eren as a character. But, it couldn't be denied that I would benefit greatly from his absence. And, frankly, I'd prefer a more… permanent arrangement for his absence, but I couldn't kill him without killing that worm thing.
The Hallucigenia. The 'Source of All Living Matter.' It was the source of the titans, after grafting itself to Ymir some two thousand years ago in Attack on Titan canon. It was also a whole can of worms that I wasn't yet interested in opening.
It was currently resting inside Eren's spine, him inheriting it with the Founding Titan powers. I couldn't kill it without destroying all titans across the world, and I didn't want to do that yet. Possibly ever, honestly. I could use that worm, so for the sake of my future plans, I had to keep Eren alive. And, admittedly, given the nature of the time loop, I'm not sure that I even could kill Eren given that he had to send

his memories into the past to create the fu- ah, fuck it. I didn't even want to think about that nonsense.
"Activate hibernation mode," I ordered the Attack Ball, throwing the protagonist inside the ship unceremoniously. He barely stirred as the ship began to close the door, sealing with a hiss of air, filling with a mist that would keep him unconscious for as long as needed. For decades even, as space travel often required. Then, with my scouter, I continued. "Go into stealth mode on the dark side of the moon. Remain there until ordered."
With that, the Attack Ball floated up before sharply racing to the sky above, obeying my orders. There, Eren would stay, out of sight and out of mind, until I either needed my ship again or I had a way to deal with that worm.
I watched the ship vanish beyond the dark gray clouds, and only when it was gone entirely did I turn my attention to the only person nearby. She was strong enough I almost mistook her for a titan, in all honesty. It was only the scouter labeling her as a human that convinced me of who she was.
Flying over, I arrived at a familiar scene.
A thirty-foot-tall titan was walking through a back street, swinging wildly at a cadet, who just barely managed to throw herself out of the way from being swatted like a fly. Medium length black hair, steel gray eyes, and a lean form with a red scarf around her neck. There was no mistaking her.
Mikasa Ackerman.
Member of the 104th cadet class. Placed 1st. Best girl.
She tumbled uncontrollably from the shockwave that rang out, but she managed to rise to her feet. Yet, there was a certain detachment in her movements. I recalled this moment from the anime quite well -- almost to the point that I could see the flashback going on inside of her head. Honestly, it made me feel a little bad about sending Eren away. As far as Mikasa was aware, he had been eaten by a titan, and he was dead.
Then I saw the moment that I had been waiting for. Mikasa shifted, grabbing her sword at her waist and taking a wide stance as the Titan loomed closer to her. A primal cry of determination ripped from her throat as she stood defiant of the lunging titan.
And it was at precisely that moment that I chose to step in.
A bead of ki formed at the tip of my finger, and I fired it directly at the lunging titan, eviscerating it until it was split in half. That brought Mikasa up short as she quickly reacted to my arrival, looking up before her eyes filled with incomprehension at the sight of me. I crossed my arms, lowering myself down to her level, and I wore a very self-satisfied smirk.
Nailed that entrance. Ten out of ten.

"W-who… what are you?" Mikasa breathed, and… honestly…
Why not?
"My name is Galick, a Saiyan Warrior," I introduced myself. Might as well go all in on it. It might be a dream, so there was no reason not to. And if it wasn't…? Well, it wasn't like I was human anymore. A saiyan named Bob would just be… "You didn't give up. Good. I wouldn't have bothered saving you if you had."
Mikasa blinked, but she still gaped up at me, drinking in the sight of me. "You… wouldn't…?" She whispered, struggling to come to grips with what she was looking at. I'm sure the tail was part of it, but I'm guessing it was mostly the unaided flight.
"Of course not," I replied. "Living isn't for the meek. There's no point in saving someone who isn't willing to fight to survive." Oh, I was pushing all the right buttons because Mikasa flinched back as if she had been struck. It was manipulative as all hell, sure, but still true. And now, more so than ever before, the words resonated with me because of my Saiyan blood.
Mikasa seemed to swallow a lump in her throat, a hand drifting up to touch the red scarf around her neck and she closed her eyes for just a moment. When she opened them, her gray eyes were clearer. The doubt and hesitation had been cleared. "Thank you."
The moment came to an end when others arrived. Two people, and I recognized them both. One was blonde while the other had a shaved head, both young.
Armin is one of Mikasa's childhood friends and one of the protagonists of the story. The skinhead was Connie, who nearly face planted the moment he saw me.
"You- woah… Armin… Armin! You're seeing this too, right?!" Connie blurted, gaping up at me before he rushed over and waved his hand beneath me to find some wires. "I don't think it's a trick?! The guy is flying?!"
"We came when we saw a beam of… light? Was that you?" Armin asked me softly, his tone uncertain but there was a spark of wonder in his eyes.
"I think this is a poor time for idle chatter. I'm not entirely sure what's happening on this planet, but you do seem to be under attack," I noted drily, raising a finger up and firing off another weak ki blast that tore through an approaching titan. I resisted the urge to scowl and pretended that firing through the building behind the Titan had been intentional. The three of them were awed by the casual display of power.
"He's right! The others! The others are making their way to the storehouse!" Connie blurted, fidgeting as he looked like he wanted to do a dozen things at once. "Flyin' guy, you'll help us, right?"

"I might as well, I suppose," I said, offering a shrug. I had a plan coming together in the back of my mind, but even if I didn't, it wasn't like I'd just leave them to be eaten. Without Eren to pave the way for them, the cadets would be stranded and probably get slaughtered. "I'm not one to start something and leave it unfinished."

With that, I floated upward while the others used their ODM gear to attach to the buildings around them and reel themselves up. And, I had to say, it was interesting to see ODM gear work in person and not on a screen. Mikasa watched me from the corner of her eyes, though the action didn't seem hostile as they led me through the district.

Every errant titan was dealt with a weak ki blast as they led me right to the castle thing which had a bunch of titans crawling all over it. My scouter picked up three other shifters in the building, telling me that the rest of their class had already arrived inside. Sure enough, Connie, Armin, and Mikasa all sailed through the busted glass windows.

The titans were clawing at the building to get inside so they could feast on the humans within, so I made myself useful.

Flying over, I grabbed one by the hair and yanked back with enough strength that the titan was sent crashing into the buildings across the street. It wasn't just my overwhelming strength that let me toss them around like this, but also how unnaturally light the titans were. They were still heavy, but only hundreds of pounds rather than the thousands that their size would imply.

Wanting to try something a little new, I formed a ki ball above my palm, and I flicked it at a titan. Instead of 'letting go' of the ki, I tried to maintain my grip on it, allowing me to control it and send it at another titan. They weren't much fun to fight, I decided, finding myself bored with them already as I cleared the courtyard. More titans were coming, but they were few and far away at the moment.

Leaving me free to fly up to the roof of the building, where all the cadets and garrison troops gathered. There weren't that many of them -- around a hundred or so. All of them wore expressions of naked disbelief, but it was Mikasa who approached.

"Could you take care of the titans in the store room? Please?" She asked, and I shrugged, simply descending through the roof and floor. Solid stone was like tissue paper to me, I realized with some amazement. They offered the same resistance as wet cardboard. Because of it, I arrived inside of the store room at the bottom floor of the castle, and ki gathered around one of my hands.

It was another rough ki blade. Not pretty, but functional as it allowed me to destroy the titans' weakness with single swipes of my hand.

"Thank you," Mikasa said, dropping down the hole that I made. The others were swift to follow, the prospect of salvation stealing their attention from me. Yet, I still noticed the glances. In particular from

Annie, Reiner, and Bertholdt. I paid it no mind. I had some plans for them. "You've helped us a great deal. How can we repay you?"
The question was softly spoken, but earnest.
"I require a meeting with your military commanders," I replied, watching as the cadets filled the air canisters for the ODM gear. All the while, the plan started to piece itself together. I saw a lot of designs in my ship, most of which I couldn't make any sense of. But, I understood the gist of them -- acquire resources, set up foundries for refinement and processing, turn the refined resources into materials, and then bit by bit, assemble something that could reach the stars.
I had cards up my sleeve that didn't require brute force. And, while I imagined that I would be plenty of brute force, a softer touch would bring more allies to my side when I did take over the planet.
"Is that why you're here? Why you came in the first place?" She asked me, her curiosity getting the better of her.
"In a manner of speaking," I deflected, not really answering the question. Mikasa seemed a bit disappointed, but she accepted the answer for what it was. I also saw Armin mulling over that answer, casting subtle glances at me then looking like a kid with his hand caught in the cookie jar when I caught one of those glances. He sharply looked away and his hands began to tremble as he refilled his gas canisters.
The entire process took about twenty minutes for everyone to be topped up, and once they were, they entrusted their safety to me to lead them to the wall. I would like to say it was exciting, but the truth of it… it was rather boring. We came across about a dozen titans, and they were dealt with effortlessly before the survivors reached the wall and climbed up it with their gear.
"H-Halt!" A voice shouted as the survivors arrived at the top of the wall. It didn't take a genius to figure out that the word was directed at me.
"Stay where you are! What manner of creature are you?!"
I looked over at the source to find another familiar face. Light brown hair with a beard. His eyes were overflowing with fear, and he trembled like a leaf even as he gripped his ODM gear blades with white knuckles. I had absolutely no idea what his name was, but I recognized him easily enough.
At our arrival, the garrison on the wall formed a semi-circle, with the majority of the other cadets scrambling beyond the line. Only a few remained with me -- Mikasa, Armin, and, very
interestingly, Reiner. The three of them all wore severe expressions, contrasting my own amusement. There were around fifty people surrounding me at the moment, their blades drawn, and they looked upon me with fear. Borderline terror.
And they weren't threatening in the slightest. It was like a kitten hissing

and swatting at you -- it was more adorable than anything.
"Is that your commander?" I drawled, making it clear that I was unimpressed with the man.
"It is," Mikasa confirmed before stepping forward. "Commander Woermann! Stop this! He is an ally of humanity! He saved us!"
Woermann sucked in a sharp breath, looking up at me and the longer our eyes met, the more fearful he became. I raised an eyebrow at him, and that got him to flinch. He swallowed thickly before yelling out, "Humanity is on the cusp of annihilation! He- whatever he is, he is an unknown in a time of strife! Humanity is one mistake away from extinction, and for all we know, he could be working with the titans!"
Fear. The man allowed fear to completely rule his sense of judgment. And that was infecting all the others with him.
I could reassure him. Speak softly. But the man was simply too far gone for that. "How insulting," I remarked drily, and the tension swelled until you could choke on it. For them, at least. "Allow me to make something abundantly clear for you -- you have built these walls out of fear of the titans as, to you, they are an existential threat."
I held Woermann's gaze, even as the man trembled. "To me, the titans aren't fit to serve as entertainment. I don't need to ally myself with such pathetic creatures. If I were to be your enemy… well, you wouldn't have questions of whether I was or not."
A sadist was never something I considered myself to be, but I couldn't deny it was gratifying to see the man flinch at that. To know that, as afraid as he was, as desperate as he might be, there was genuinely nothing that he could do to me. The feeling was almost intoxicating. The idea that I could be untouchable.
It was actually alarming how intoxicating the idea was, so I forced myself to temper it.
There was a very loud silence in the wake of my declaration. The people around me didn't dare to so much as breathe. I'm not sure if they really believed me or not. Most of them hadn't seen me kill a dozen or so titans, but they didn't understand me. And, honestly, I think that scared them more.
However, because they were so silent, the crank to the lift that brought up supplies from the ground on the other side of the wall echoed out until it came to a stop. And it was then that I saw the man whom I was really waiting for.
He was an older man. A silver mustache with a closely shaven head. Wrinkles gathered in the corners of his golden brown eyes, and in his hand was a silver flask that he took a swig of as he approached fearlessly, breaching through the line of soldiers that surrounded me. Dot Pixis. The real man in charge, and a centerpiece for my future plans.

"Well, well, well. Looks like these old eyes of mine aren't playing tricks on me. You really are flying. And you have a tail. Interesting," Pixis remarked, sounding remarkably at ease with the situation. It contrasted harshly with the man he chose to stand beside, Woermann. "I don't suppose you also have a name I could call you by?"
"Galick. A Saiyan Warrior," I introduced myself, measuring him as much as he was me. The deck was thoroughly stacked in my favor, and, to be frank, Pixis had no idea just how many aces that I had up my sleeve. He couldn't. Not when he, and nearly everyone else within the walls, was completely ignorant of what lay beyond them walls and their small island. Between my metaknowledge and my raw power, I had a position of absolute strength. "You seem to be holding yourself together better than that one. Are you the one who's in charge of this mess?"
"That I am. Dot Pixis, commander of Trost and the entirety of the southern territory," Pixis formally introduced himself. "A pleasure to meet you. Especially in such auspicious times and dire circumstances. I understood that you went out of your way to save a number of our youngsters. I thank you for it."
"It was hardly a bother," I replied evenly, making the older man hum before taking a swig of his flask.
"So I hear," he admitted. He must have been informed on the way up the wall. For a man tossed into the deep end head first, he was treading water well enough. "I don't suppose you would care to share what brings you here? I'm unaware of what a Saiyan is, or where you come from. But, from the looks of things, you seem to be a stranger in a strange place."
He was sharp. "My origins are a topic that I doubt you would have the context to understand, but as for why I'm here… I am a Saiyan, and I am amongst the last of my kind. I was sent here to your planet to reproduce as our species are genetically compatible." That got a blink out of the man and, amusingly, he checked his flask to make sure it wasn't drugged or something.
This was the first step of my plan.
Paradis was isolated by the titans and the world at large. They were in a position of weakness, as the titans feasted on them while the world hated them. No matter what, they had no allies. None except for me, and with me on their side, losing became impossible. As such, they would give me what I wanted to protect themselves and their people. Each time they came to me, hat in hand, they would cede more control to me because they wouldn't have any choice to. Not unless they were willing to throw hundreds of lives away to accomplish what I could do with a wave of my hand. They wouldn't be blind to that fact either, but what could they do?

So, I would start with this. If I were really going to forge the Saiyan Empire, then I would need Saiyans. They would be half-breeds, sure, but unless I could reproduce asexually then that was always going to be the case if I didn't run into one of those other Saiyans Emperor Vegeta mentioned. And, admittedly, I was a little curious.
What would a Saiyan-Ackerman hybrid be like? The Ackerman family was basically a natural super-soldier. The people around me had an average power level of 5pl. And that was with weapons in hand, which my scouter accounted for.
Mikasa? She had a power level of 50pl. Swords sheathed.
In the grand scheme of things? Not that impressive, admittedly, but it was wildly impressive in the context of her setting.
"You want to… reproduce with us?" Pixis echoed, swirling his flask as he came to grips with that. "I hope you don't mean me, young man. I'm not sure if I'd survive it."
That got a slight smile out of me, "I ask that your government provide female warriors who would consent to bearing my children. The more powerful and skilled they are, the better, as my species is a warrior race." That got a ripple from the crowd that listened in, making them exchange glances. I saw quite a few blushing faces, too.
Pixis held my gaze for a moment, still swirling his flask. "And, naturally, you would protect your children while they grow up."
"Naturally," I agreed. It would be a few years before I planned to actually have any kids, however. In Dragon Ball Z, Vegeta had voiced a concern, and it echoed with me -- I didn't want one of my kids getting any wise ideas and trying overthrowing me while I was still getting a handle on my Saiyan abilities. Later down the line, when I had fully puzzled out how ki works and how to take advantage of my Saiyan heritage? That's fair game. If I get overthrown, then I had it coming.
Pixis took another deep swig of his flask and bottomed it up. When he was done taking a few large gulps, he inclined his head to me. "I'm not sure if the government will order young women to carry your children… but I imagine that you'll find plenty willing to if you save humanity. Such as… killing the titans in Trost."
They might not order it, no, but once they understood my preferences, they would lean on those that met them. To pressure not only to offer their hearts to save humanity, but also their wombs.
"Then you find partners attractive through merit? Good," I nodded, pretending that I didn't quite understand humanity. Just a touch to make it clear that I was alien, and that would always put them on the back foot when dealing with me. Because, if I was an alien… What were my values? What would I find offensive? Admirable? "But there's little point in killing them now if that hole remains."
"Quite true. I don't suppose you would have a way to amend that, would

you?" Pixis he asked, judging and measuring.
I probably should play it on the safe side… but there was an itch in my blood. A desire to push myself. Test myself. So, heedless of whether I could really do it or not, I found myself saying, "I saw a big rock when I flew above Trost. I'll just grab it." The very same rock that Eren has lifted to seal the breach.
It had to weigh tons. Hundreds of tons, even. Maybe even a million. That rock was as large as Eren had been in his titan form, and it was solid stone. And it was nothing but pure pride that motivated me.
If Eren could do it as a titan, then I could surely do it as a Saiyan.
"Well… that'd do it, I think."
"I'll take care of it then. Wait here," I instructed easily, flying off the wall and down towards Trost. I could feel hundreds of eyes on my back as I spotted the massive stone that sat in the middle of a district near the wall itself. Not that far from the gate, honestly. A couple of hundred yards.
There was a hum of anticipation with my heart fluttering in my chest. It'd be embarrassing as all hell if I screwed this up but that fear was tempered by the confidence that I would succeed. And in doing so, I would solidify myself as an asset in the eyes of the people who were actually important within the wall.
The lords who controlled that puppet of a king? The petty nobles? I'd kill them. Probably soon, in all likelihood. Might as well strike while the iron is hot.
But, first, I had to move a big ass rock.
"So long as I remember to lift with my legs, I should be fine," I told myself, flying down to the base of the stone. Placing a hand on it, I felt the rough stone under my palm and I began to gently push the stone up and to the side. The surface of it began to crack a bit, but that was stopped by infusing the rock with a little bit of my ki. Enough to keep it intact.
It made it easier to push the rock over a bit, so I could start to shuffle underneath it. I didn't mind the dirt or the insects that clung to the bottom, as I was far too distracted by a crushing weight that was saddled on my back and shoulders. I had the raw strength to move the rock, so, I could just roll the thing to the gate but that wasn't enough. I wanted to lift it and carry it there.
And I could sense what a task that would be.
Yet, I found myself undaunted by the task as I settled the rock on my back. I was excited. My Saiyan biology demanded that I meet the challenge that I had set for myself and go beyond my limitations. So, I obeyed.
"Hnnnhhh!" I grit my teeth as I began to lift the stone up. The veins in my arms began to bulge with the strain, my fingers sinking into the

stone despite my reinforcement. I trembled with exertion, going red in the face as I had to force myself to breathe as I shifted the crushing weight to my shoulders when I stood tall.
Despite the feeling that I was about to be crushed like an insect, there was a smile on my face as I took a step forward. Each step had to reinforce the ground with ki, else I'd slide right through the soft stone and dirt. But I also couldn't channel too much, or the stone would shatter above me.
The challenge was exhilarating. Even as my arms began to scream for respite, I found myself elated by the fact that I could train myself physically and train my ki control at the same time.
I'd never considered myself lazy before. I worked and I relaxed, and I worked so I could relax. There was nothing special about me in that regard. I didn't possess an inhuman work ethic that could power through forty-eight hours of nonstop labor. I wasn't someone who was a workaholic either, who simply couldn't help himself from working at all hours of the day.
I was still me, but I was starting to see the changes that being in a different body was having on me because every step I took with the stone felt like an orgasm. The feeling of making progress and overcoming a challenge hit harder than any drug. Even as my body begged for me to put the rock down, even the idea that I could die from being crushed… they just weren't compelling enough reasons to stop.
So, I walked. One foot after another, carrying a stone so large and heavy it felt like the world itself was resting on my shoulders. Unwilling to drop it or be crushed by it until I reached my destination. Even as one step turned into ten, then ten a hundred, and a hundred a thousand. Sweat dripped from my brow with every movement, but I found it bothered me none.
And that became all the more true when I spied the gate. Step by step, I approached it. I could see titans approaching from the other side of the broken gate, but I paid them no mind. I simply took a bracing breath as I shifted my grip, pivoting ever so slightly.
Then, with the last bit of distance, I thrusted the massive stone into the gap. The ground trembled as the stone settled in its place, where it would stay for good.
I was grinning ear to ear as my muscles got the respite they had been begging for. All I had to do now was a little clean up…
"Phase one of world domination complete."

Chapter 2

Levi Ackerman stared dispassionately into the crater that had drawn the Survey Corp out here, and he couldn't deny that it was an impressive sight. It was located nearly dead center between Wall Maria and Wall Rose, around a hundred yards wide and a hundred feet deep. He had heard rumors, back as a child, about how the stars sometimes fell. At the time, he hadn't ever seen the sky, but the idea of it had filled him with wonder. And now, he wondered if he was looking at the aftermath of one of those stars falling.

There was just one issue with that idea.

"There's nothing here," Levi remarked, a tightly bound chord of anger leaking into his voice as his grip tightened on his blade.

"That makes it all the more intriguing," Erwin, a freakishly tall man next to him, replied, sounding delighted with finding nothing. His blonde hair was pushed back into place from their frantic ride and detour from their planned route.

People died to come here. The Survey Corp was the most dangerous of the three branches of the military, as they were the only ones that dared to leave the walls. Every expedition incurred irreplaceable losses, often dozens of men gave their lives for the sake of progress and answering humanity's countless questions about the Titans and the world that lay beyond the walls.

And those dozen deaths were a marked improvment since Erwin took charge of the scouts, going from half to sometimes more than half their number, to only thirty percent for every expidition.

Each expedition was carefully plotted out. The loss of Wall Maria undid a hundred years of progress for the Survey Corp, but in the years since, every expedition served the purpose of building a supply chain and path back to Wall Maria. A task that more than a hundred people had given their lives toward.

And that pattern was broken because they saw something fall from the sky and the explosion that followed had the horses in a terrified frenzy. They made the decision, despite knowing that it would be paid for in blood and the lives of their comrades. They would divert their path to come to the landing site and hope desperately that what they found was worth the cost.

Levi had imagined a lot of things in the hours-long trip it took to arrive. Maybe it would be a titan, and they would learn that they fell from the sky. Maybe it would be a big rock made out of something that could kill titans. But, never once did he consider the possibility that there wouldn't be a single damn thing.

"How do you figure that, hm?" Levi grunted, curling his hands into a fist

before he crossed his arms.
"Because it means that whatever landed got up and left!" A third voice interjected, answering his question. Levi swallowed a sigh, glancing at her from the corner of his eye to see her patting rocks and yelping when they proved too hot. Hange was another squad leader, like him, and one who specialized in investigating titans. Auburn brown hair, naturally tanned skin, with dark brown eyes. She was one of the best. It was just everything else about her that was questionable.
"We found signs of a fight nearby -- wood splintering that's consistent with a fifty-foot titan hitting a tree. Something hit it, and hit it hard. Hard enough to knock it off its feet," Hange continued before pointing at the center of the crater. "Whatever arrived, it came in the form of a ball. Roughly large enough for an average-sized human to fit in. Or two Levis."
Levi just sighed at the joke, unable to feel anything more than exasperation at it. "So something that can send a titan flying. Sounds useful. If we could find it."
"Him! Or her!" Hange corrected, and that earned more than just a sharp look from Levi and Erwin. "We have tracks. Fresh ones. From the looks of things, they ran towards the titan, jumped up thirty feet, and used that tree to send themselves at the titan." She said, pointing towards where the bark was indented.
One thing was missing, however.
"No maneuver gear marks," Erwin voiced what they both noticed. "Whoever arrived, they possess inhuman physical strength. We may need to expand our search patterns."
"You think it might be a relative of yours?" Hange asked Levi, elbowing him in the shoulder. "Might lose your title, 'Humanity's Strongest Soldier.'"
"Hopefully," Levi admitted, his gaze flickering away from the tree and to the field beyond the crater. There, he saw them approach. titans. Three of them, one of each class. Fifteen feet, thirty, and fifty -- each had their own unique challenges to face. That was without considering factors like Abnormals, which behaved erratically. They could express themselves in a wide variety of ways, and even with Hange's hours-long lectures, Levi knew that she was no closer to discovering the answer.
Those three Titans, if left unchecked, and in poor terrain… would be enough to slaughter the entirety of the Survey Corp. All except for the best of them. That was the disparity of power between humanity and the Titans. That was the gap that Levi found himself trying to bridge, knowing that he was one of the very few who had any hope of doing it.
It was because he was looking directly at them that he saw what happened next. A brilliant blue light struck the Titans, striking each at

the lower jaw and upper chest, hitting their nape. Their weakness. By the time he blinked, the three Titans were already collapsing, gaping holes torn through them.
"... What?" Levi breathed, his eyes narrowing a fraction, half wondering if his eyes were playing tricks on him. Yet, sure enough, he felt a gentle breeze brush across his face and hair from the blast, while the Titans began to steam as they evaporated into nothing. Slowly, he began to lift his eyes up to the source, and there he saw something that made even less sense than three Titans being casually dealt with.
A man was flying down towards them. He was another freakishly tall giant, wearing strange blue armor with a black skin-tight undersuit that revealed defined muscles. He wasn't sure what the armor was made of, but it had taken a beating. His eyes were black, while his spiky hair was slicked back until it reached the nape of his neck, all except for a thick lock that drifted before an eye. He looked like he was in his teens, but there wasn't a trace of youth to be found on his face.
"Are you lot the Survey Corp?" The flying man announced his presence to the lot of them, his arms crossed, and he seemed rather unimpressed with them all. It was only as he lowered himself down towards the ground that Levi realized that he wasn't wearing a belt. It was a tail. "I'm here for some people named Erwin and Levi. You're presence is required for a meeting. Oh, and Trost was attacked by the Colossal Titan. I dealt with that, though."
Levi wasn't someone who was surprised easily. He was only thirty years old, but it was a life of hard living even before he joined the Scouts. His childhood was spent in the underground city, a glorified pit that everyone pretended didn't exist. He was a man by the time he saw the sky for the first time, and in those years, Levi genuinely thought that he saw it all. He had been wrong, of course, but in his years as a Scout? That felt like it filled up the few gaps left.
Not the case, it would seem.
Levi looked to Erwin, trusting him to take the lead on this, while Levi himself braced for a fight. Though keeping the new arrival in his periphery, he wasn't entirely certain what his options were. The guy was flying unassisted. That gave him complete control of his maneuverability in the open air, something that ODM gear couldn't accomplish. Erwin gazed up at the new arrival, his expression carefully guarded.
"I see," Erwin began, and Levi was glad that he did because Levi sure didn't. "Then you have our thanks, and the thanks of humanity for protecting us from the Colossal Titan. I am Commander Erwin of the Survey Corp. Would I be correct in assuming that this crater is because of you?"
"The name is Galick, and yeah, this is where I landed. Didn't know that

you lot were out here, though," Galick replied, sounding ambivalent about the whole affair. Levi glanced at Hange, curious why she wasn't interjecting and being herself. And he saw that she was -- she was staring up at Galick, jaw dropped, with a bit of drool starting to dribble down her chin. There wasn't anything remotely sexual about it, either. It was pure unrestrained curiosity. "Woulda stuck around if I knew that, but… well, it's probably best that I didn't. Trost wasn't doing so well until I arrived."
"I see," Erwin repeated, and Levi was starting to get the impression that he didn't and was just saying that. "With the Trost situation in hand, I cannot abandon my men in the field. I ask for your understanding… and perhaps your aid. It was a twelve-hour journey to this point, but without needing to change course for Titans, we could return in as little as six."
Galick tilted his head, and Levi knew that expression. He didn't know who or what Galick was, but he looked human, and Levi knew people. That was the expression of someone who was considering something troublesome, before deciding against it simply because it'd be too big of a pain in the ass. "Not through Trost. Kinda filled the gate with a big rock, and I can't be bothered to ferry you all up one after another."
"That won't be necessary. We have the equipment on the Wall to lift us over it. Will you help us?" Erwin questioned, and Galick shrugged his shoulders.
"Might as well. It'd give the rest of them some time to stop freaking out on what to do with me," Galick admitted, lowering himself to the ground. "Hurry it up, though, yeah?"
"Of course," Erwin replied easily, offering a bow of his head before he began to belt out orders. It was only at that moment that Hange managed to get a hold of herself, taking a quick few steps forward and invading the personal space of Galick.
"My name is Hange! A squad leader in the Scout Corps! Pleased to make your acquaintance!" Hange exclaimed, grabbing his hands and shaking it with both of hers. There was a mad gleam in her eye as she shook it vigorously. "How are you able to fly? Why do you have a tail? Why does your hair look like that? What did you arrive inside?"
Galick, to his credit, seemed unbothered by the questions. And by those around them pretending that they weren't listening. "Ki, because I'm a Saiyan, Saiyans are born with a hairstyle and it remains unchanged until we either die or go bald, and my spaceship."
"You landed in a boat?!" Hange blurted, like that was the most absurd thing he said. Levi stuck close to the pair, on guard as he communicated with his team with pointed glances. His team was handpicked elites, some of the very best that the Scouts had to offer -- Eld Jinn, his second in command. Oluo Bozado, Gunther Schultz, and Petra Ral as the only woman on the team. All of them exceptionally

skilled.
Collectively, they had killed more than two hundred and fifty titans. More than the rest of humanity combined.
Yet Levi felt powerless, as he knew they wouldn't be able to so much as draw Galick's blood if he attacked them. All he would need to do was fly directly upward and send whatever that blue blast was at them. That's all it would take. And, try as he might, Levi couldn't think of a single thing to do about it.
The Scouts departed, and that feeling of helplessness was only intensified as they began the journey back to Trost. The Titans that they had dodged out of the way of with their formation had been trailing behind them, and tried to attack.
Not a single one of them came close. Without fail, Galick shot them with a 'ki' beam, killing them instantly and with little fanfare. Hour by hour, he racked up kills, allowing them to charge full speed ahead with their horses and wagons. By the end of it, he'd killed twenty-four Titans. All solo kills.
Galick entertained Hange's questions during the trip, but he knew what he was doing. His answers lacked context or were deflections. He didn't give her much more information than he did at the start, and Levi found himself thinking that the whole thing made less and less sense. He wasn't the only one. "Your thoughts?" Erwin questioned in a low voice, his gaze fixed on the 'Saiyan.'
"He's friendly. You better hope that he stays that way," Levi answered with honesty. Erwin wasn't surprised, but his expression did tighten. He liked living under someone's thumb even less than Levi did.
With that, the six-hour trip was relatively peaceful. The danger of the Titans was completely nullified by Galick's presence. Yet, they still carried a certain kind of tension, even as the walls came into view.
"Alright, brace yourselves," Galick said, darting toward Levi, and he found himself unceremoniously picked up by the back of his jacket with Erwin alongside him. Levi went rigged as they flew up, his body well acquainted with the sensation of flying through the air, but there was a fluidity to it that set his teeth on edge. It was very different than moving with 3D maneuver gear.
"You don't have a more dignified way to do this?" Levi asked, finding himself thoroughly annoyed as the wall swiftly passed by from underneath him. Trost, as promised, was a shit show. He could smell death from above. There was also that massive rock that the military hoped to move to block the gate but never got around to actually making a plan to pull it off, plugging the busted gate as planned.
Trost had been attacked, alright. Overrun. And they hadn't been there. Bad timing, or enemy action?
"This is the more dignified way," Galick replied, but Levi could hear the

grin in his voice.
He tsked under his breath, "Just don't drop us." He glanced at Erwin, who wore his usual mask that made him hard to read. But he could hear the gears turning in his mind as they flew by Wall Rose.
And then Wall Sina. The third and final wall that protected humanity from the Titans. It was the smallest of the three districts, and the one where the uppermost nobility lived and the richest merchants. He hated it every time he was forced to come -- the luxury of the inner district was nauseating.
It wasn't the buildings that disgusted him so. Or how they threw a fountain up at seemingly every single intersection. It was how they wasted the single most valuable thing that humanity had.
Space.
Humanity, since it had first put up the walls, had a finite amount of space in which it could dwell. Every inch within the walls had been cultivated either as farm land or forests for game. It was why when Wall Maria fell, hundreds of thousands of people were forced outside in a vain attempt to reclaim the territory with nothing but sticks and stones. It was why there were still food shortages to this day, years later.
And the inner district wasted so much space. Wide open roads, flanked with well-manicured lawns. Every villa had a garden and a winding road leading up to the front door. Buildings that could house a dozen families were reserved for a single one and an army of servants. Naturally, the palace was the biggest offender of them all. A large building comprised of several wings, a long road leading to it with a tall gate separating it from the rest of the buildings around it.
Galick dropped them off at the front door, and two members of the Military Police gaped at them. Galick paid them no mind, pushing the door open and striding into the palace like he owned the place. And for that alone, he felt a semblance of respect for the 'Saiyan.'
"Warrior Galick, welcome to the royal palace," a well-dressed man said, dropping into a practiced bow. A butler. "You as well, Commander Erwin and Captain Levi. His highness eagerly awaits your presence."
Ah… fuck. The king.
Levi straightened out his appearance as they walked through the decadent halls, leading to the throne room. The butler bowed before pushing the doors open, revealing who they would be meeting with.
He knew most of them by reputation and in passing. On one side was Commander Pixis, who was nursing a flask with a white haired woman by his side. Rico Brzenska. Skilled, ranking at 11th during her time as a cadet. She missed her shot at an easy life with the Military Police, so she settled in the Garrison.
On the other hand was the Military Police. Nile Dok, another freakishly

tall giant with dark hair and eyes. His gaze was filled with caution as he beheld not only Galick, but he and Erwin as well. Nile was joined by Djel Sannes, who ranked 1st during his cadet class some fifteen years ago. Directly before them, however, was someone of more interest. Premier Dhalis Zachary, the Commander-in-Chief of the three military branches. His hair and beard were a silvery white, and he sat composed in a chair to the left of the king.
Sitting on the right, on the side of the Military Police, was Rod Reiss. A man of average height, black hair, and a neatly trimmed beard. He was the Duke in the kingdom and someone of importance. As far as Levi was aware, he wasn't the worst sort of noble who couldn't even tie their own shoes without someone guiding their hands, but that was the extent to which he was willing to acknowledge the man.
The King himself was an older man. With silver hair and beard, his head propped up by a hand as he stared directly at Galick, seemingly undaunted. He wore loose-fitting white robes, and, appearance-wise the guy was about what Levi would expect of a king.
"Welcome, Galick. Erwin and Levi. Please, be seated. I suspect that there is a great deal to discuss," Lord Reiss began, offering a tepid smile to get things started. Levi wordlessly refused the chair, choosing to stand beside Erwin. His blades hadn't been confiscated, which told him his role in the meeting. He was here in case Galick tried something.
Galick took the offered chair, and as a result, he sat before a half circle of people. The highest lords and military men within the walls. He seemed unbothered, simply crossing his legs as he locked eyes with the King. And tilted his head, blinking a few times, as if he realized something curious. And amusing, with how his lips quirked up.
Premier Zachary narrowed his eyes and chose to continue where Reiss left off. "Commander Pixis has conveyed your… expectations for your help with Trost. I will admit, it is being heavily considered, but before I render a verdict on anything, I would like… information. Context, if you will. You called yourself a Saiyan Warrior, but what exactly does that mean?" The man asked, leaning forward ever so slightly.
"I am not human," Galick answered without preamble. "Genetically speaking, we are similar. I'm not human, but I'm something like a human," he elaborated when he saw incomprehension on what he meant by 'genetics.' "I came from the sky above, beyond the stars in the night sky, in my ship, a one man vessel that's capable of traveling great distances, with the mission of repopulating my race."
Levi didn't blink, but he wanted to. It didn't seem to be news to the others, but it was to them. Which also told Levi why they bothered inviting the Scouts -- it was purely for Levi's presence. They weren't expected to have an opinion, and if they did, then it wasn't worth

listening to.
"Because you are amongst the last of your race, correct? What happened?" Premier Zachary asked without an inflection, making a note on a piece of paper that Levi couldn't read.
"What you have experienced with the Titans is more or less what you can expect from space. There are countless species amongst the stars, some so close in nature that we can interbreed, while others are completely different. However, as a general rule, any species that's capable of reaching the stars does so because they are able to dominate their planet. Which tends to be more common with… aggressive species." Galick continued, and Levi fought to keep his expression blank.
The stars. He never paid much mind to them beyond admiring that they were pretty to look at. He'd never spared a thought for what might dwell in that sea of darkness. There never seemed to be a point, as they didn't even know what lay beyond their walls.
"My species came into conflict with another race. We fought. We lost. Now, the remnants have been cast out across the stars to worlds such as your own, with species we can breed with," Galick said, sounding rather uncaring about the near extinction of his species. That thought showed on the others' faces as he continued with a shrug. "We weren't strong enough to prevent our defeat. If you can't defend your life, then you have no right to it."
There was a noticeable change in the air at the remark, one that Galick seemed content to ignore. It was about as alarming as learning that there was something out there that could chew up people like Galick, who dealt with Titans as one might step on ants.
"Of course, for your aid in Trost, we will allow you to remain within the walls," Lord Reiss said, and Galick looked at the man with flat eyes and a cutting smile.
"Allow."
It wasn't often that Levi found himself impressed, but he was. With a single word, the room went from tense to suffocating. Reiss flinched like he had been struck, sweat forming on his brow and his mouth flapped uselessly as he tried to will the words back into his mouth.
Erwin interjected, paying the tension no mind. "From what I have witnessed of your abilities… retaking the Wall of Maria is possible, is it not?"
Galick's gaze slid to Erwin, and he offered a respectful nod. "Yeah, shouldn't be any trouble." It wasn't the words that set Levi on edge, but the ease with which he said them. He meant that. Dozens of people had given their lives for inches of progress, to take the steps necessary to retake the Wall of Maria. And Galick made it sound like a particularly dull errand. The worst part of it was that Levi believed him.

Galick could take Wall Maria today, if he felt like it.
"But I'm not the kind of guy who does unnecessary things without a reason," Galick continued, his gaze sliding to Reiss. Not the King. Galick seemed to have completely dismissed the monarch that was currently staring a hole through him.
Reiss, however, seemed to understand the message. "I'm sure his majesty will offer a suitable reward for your efforts. A dukedom seems most fitting, taken from the reconquered territory," he said, looking to the King. The man offered a single solitary nod, and that was the only indication that he had been listening. "As for the other matter that was discussed… am I to understand that your children would be… like you? They could do the things that you do?"
"They will," Galick answered shortly, not giving any reaction to the idea of becoming a duke. Nobility. Levi wasn't sure if he even understood what that was.
"I imagine that you would also be capable of handling the Titans beyond the Walls as well," Erwin continued, seemingly having his own private conversation with Galick, heedless of the audience he had. His blue eyes were intense as he interlocked his fingers and leaned forward, trying to look through Galick, who met his gaze evenly.
"Won't be that hard. There's only about a thousand of them left on the island," Galick said, and Levi saw how Reiss stilled at the words. It stole his attention away. Reiss looked like someone had heard something terrifying rather than good news. A thousand Titans.
That was… doable. It'd take years of effort and countless deaths, but it was doable in his lifetime.
"The island?" Erwin questioned sharply, a burning intensity in his eyes now that was borderline manic. "We are on an island? A body of land surrounded by water, correct?"
"Yeah," Galick replied with a shrug, ignorant of what the news meant to them. An island. All this time, they were on an island? It was a very strange thing to feel your world growing larger. First the stars, and now this…
"And the rest of the world -- is it overrun with Titans as we believe?" Erwin continued, but Reiss had had enough. He snapped out of his stupor and aimed a sharp glare at Erwin.
"Commander! I understand the purpose of the Survey Corps is to find these answers, but I will not allow-" Reiss started, his voice angry, but there was a sliver of fear that Levi could hear all too easily.
"Allow," Galick interjected, his voice flat as he turned a glare to Reiss. "Who are you to allow anything?"
Reiss looked to the others for support, licking his lips nervously. "I am Duke Reiss of House Reiss." He said the words like they were an explanation, and to everyone else in the room, it was. However, Galick

crossed his arms and his brow furrowed.
"A duke? The same title that you offered me for the reclamation of thousands of miles of your lost territory?" Galick narrowed his eyes, "How insulting. You would dare to put us on the same level? You? A weak-willed man who can only hide behind the ability of others? What makes you my equal?" The Military Police tensed, starting to sweat a bit as their hands went to their weapons.
Dhalis saved Reiss from having to answer, "By what metric do Saiyans measure leadership?"
"Strength. Emperor Vegeta was the strongest Saiyan alive, and that is why he ruled over us. With a mere wave of his hand, he could destroy entire planets. The difference in power between him and me is the difference between me and you." His gaze slid to the king, "So, I find it quite… vexing that you would allow this man to lead you. He can't even be bothered to stay awake during this meeting."
What?
Levi couldn't resist looking over to see that the king was staring right ahead at Galick, his face not so much as twitching as everyone's attention shifted to him. His eyes were open, but his breathing…
"He's sleeping with his eyes open, which is admittedly somewhat impressive," Galick continued in a disinterested drawl. "But not so impressive that I will accept him as my king, or you as my equal. I have no equals. Not on this planet, at least."
He wasn't wrong, Levi could admit. But only Erwin had the gall to acknowledge it. "Then why not conquer us? You have the means to. At this stage, I don't believe that we could realistically resist you. You could take over the last remnants of the human race. Killing everyone in this room would decapitate our military, and a sufficient show of force would cow the rest into submission. The women you desire to restart your race could be taken as tribute."
"Because I don't need to conquer you," Galick replied, barely reacting to the observation. "You're right. You have no recourse against me. But I find you rather admirable -- the Titans are nothing to me, yet they are an existential threat to you. You fight all the same, venturing beyond the walls that the rest of your species cower behind. The Garrison impresses me less, but they still held their ground against the Titans."
Galick offered a humorless smile, "If I were to conquer your race, then you would resist me, no matter how outmatched you are. From there, I would either be forced to side with these sniffling pieces of trash to maintain a grip on the conquered territories and population or I would need to cull your numbers significantly to a more manageable level until the resistance is crushed."
"How benevolent of you," Levi remarked sarcastically in the wake of the loud silence that followed his words.

The Saiyan shrugged, unbothered by the fear that permeated the room. "I find such a thing unnecessary. Those of you who would resist me are the ones that I have any respect for. I'd much rather cut off the dead weight that seems to hobble your species."
"You would dare-" Reiss began to blurt, but Galick merely raised a finger and fired a thin blue beam of light that punched through his forehead. His head didn't even snap back from the impact -- he just collapsed like a puppet whose strings had been cut.
"My apologies. My anger got the best of me," Galick said, lowering the finger as the Military Police stared at Reiss' rapidly cooling corpse with expressions of mounting horror. Yet, they didn't move a muscle.
"... It happens," Pixis was the one to reply, taking a deep swig of his flask.
No one did a thing. Some wanted to, like the Military Police -- Nile and Djel both trembling with as much anger as they did fear. Levi couldn't care less about some noble getting killed for running his mouth. Rico, however, was somewhere in the middle ground. Levi could almost see her understanding that they really couldn't do a damn thing. He could kill them all, and the most they could hope for was that their blood stained his clothing.
"Thank you for your understanding," Galick replied blandly before his gaze slid over to Erwin. "But, to answer your question -- I could tell you the truth now, but I won't. How many of your comrades had died for the answers that you seek?"
"Hundreds," Erwin answered unflinchingly, a certain weight to the word that made it sound so much heavier than it implied.
"Is this really how you want to find out the truth?" Galick asked him, tilting his head. "A boring tedious meeting with someone who doesn't care about the answers that matter to you?" Yes, Levi wanted to say. How you gained the answers didn't matter, so long as the price for them didn't climb any higher. "Especially when the answers are already within your reach?"
Erwin leaned forward, "Shall I take that as an offer of assistance?" He asked, and that made Levi stand a bit straighter, watching Galick like a hawk for any sign of betrayal or ill intent. Instead, he saw amusement -- like he was laughing at a joke that they didn't understand.
"I can be persuaded," Galick admitted before his gaze shifted to Premier Zachary.
"As Premier for the military, it is my duty to shape the military in a way I believe would benefit humanity," Premier Zachary said, taking off his glasses and cleaning them with a cloth. "Do I have your consent to speak with your voice, your majesty?"
There was a long stretch of silence from the slumbering king, and Premier Zachary took that as an answer.

"For the reconquest of Wall Maria, I will put forth the recommendation to his majesty that you be named the Duke of Maria. All retaken territories between Wall Rose and Maria will be yours to do with as you see fit," Premier Zachary said, returning his glasses to the bridge of his nose. The action was absurd. Even Levi understood that.
The space between Wall Rose and Maria was half of humanity's total territory.
Yet, none argued the decision. The only ones that could were either asleep or dead on the floor.
"Additionally, I will be putting forth the motion that female military personnel can consent to becoming a…joining a new branch of the military dedicated to the continuation of your species," Premier Zachary continued, and Levi swallowed a sigh. The thought of Hange having a kid with all her enthusiasm and Galick's power was the stuff of nightmares. "Commander Pixis informed me of your preferences -- skilled and talented warriors. Is that all?"
"I would prefer them to be around my age, but that is hardly an ironclad rule," Galick answered. "I am your equivalent to a teenager." That was about Levi's estimation, but it was bone-chilling to realize that your life was in the hands of a teenager. One who seemed as likely to save you as he would snuff you out.
"Understood," Premier Zachary replied, his tone decidedly flat.
"Good," Galick said, standing up. "Go ahead and start making preparations for resetting the exterior wall. I'll plug that hole in Wall Maria, and take care of the Titans within my border." He ordered them with ease, tossing a wave over his shoulder as he headed for the door. Levi watched him go, realizing that he was that uncaring about the mess he left in his wake.
It was a solid minute before any of them broke the silence that fell on the room, and it was by Djel turning to the side and puking from the tension.
Nile looked at Premier Zachary with a note of desperation on his face, "Premier! You can't be serious! You can't condone… this! He murdered a man in cold blood! He…"
Premier Zachary regarded Nile coldly, "Then arrest him." To that, Nile didn't move. His lips pressed into a thin line, and he was keenly aware of his own powerlessness. "No? That's because you realize you can't. As of this moment, humanity is effectively at the mercy of Duke Galick."
It was a hard thing to hear, but Levi didn't disagree. Neither did Erwin, "Unlike the Titans, he can at least be reasoned with. He sees value in us, the military."
"He was instigating a rebellion!" Nile snapped, proving that for all that he was panicking, he was still sharp. "He wants us to overthrow the

nobility! The King!" He made a dramatic gesture to the man, who still stared ahead unblinking.
"Damn, he's a heavy sleeper," Levi noted, finding himself a little impressed. The man was still completely unaware of everything going on around him. And he wasn't exactly making a compelling case to keep the monarchy around.
"That reveals that he needs us," Pixis replied. "To a degree, at least. Industry. Infrastructure. He wants a society. He's not willing to just slaughter most of us to make us submit. Yet."
"He doesn't need to conquer us, just as he said." Erwin voiced. "No. It would be more correct to say that he already has." He pinned a sharp look on Nile, who flinched and looked away. "Galick is the hero of Trost. For the very first time in human history, we have pushed back the Titans. Do any of us have any doubt that he will be able to reclaim Wall Maria?"
Premier Zachary sighed, "I can't say that I do."
"He will be the hero who solved the overpopulation and food shortage issues we've had since the fall of Maria. Something that the people consider impossible at this stage," Erwin continued, his voice clinical and even. He was merely stating facts, but it was a damning picture he was painting. "His strength is a beacon for our citizens. In his shadow, none need to fear the Titans. As someone who has personally witnessed his power, I cannot imagine the Titans ever being a threat to him. When word spreads…"
Pixis let out an exhausted sigh, "That sounds about right. The smarter course of action is to consider ourselves as being ruled by Galick, for the time being at least. His children are the only chance we have of dealing with him. If we could subvert one of his children to overthrow him on humanity's behalf…"
"Provided that he allows one of his children to grow strong enough to challenge him. And even then, it would be… fifteen to twenty years before we could have a potential solution," Erwin pointed out, leaning back into his chair.
Nile looked between them, his eyes bouncing between each face, but they lingered on Erwin. "This is treason. You're talking about overthrowing the monarchy for some creature that we don't know and we don't understand."
"... Effectively, yes," Premier Zachary confessed. "At this stage, we can maintain a thin veneer of independence, but if we don't take prudent and practical action soon, then even that veneer will be worn away. We only possess the freedom that he allows us, and should we prove too troublesome, I do believe that he will follow through with his alternative strategy."
Nile slumped into his chair, finding that his will to argue was

evaporating like smoke in the wind. "So we give him what he wants."
"In return, we get what we want," Erwin pointed out. "Humanity is no longer under the threat of extinction. Neither by the Titans, nor Galick himself, as he needs human women to breed with. We now know more than we ever did before -- beyond the walls, there is a body of water that surrounds us. Additionally, Galick confessed to having a ship capable of flying through the sky and to the stars. He likely has advanced technology that we may be able to convince him to share."
Nile breathed through his nose, his eyes going to the corpse that continued to spread a puddle of blood. "You make it sound reasonable."
"It isn't," Erwin swiftly denied. "But it is the situation that we've been dealt. We make plans. We prepare. We take everything that he's willing to give us and maintain our independence for as long as we are able. But denial is a luxury that humanity has never been able to afford."
Nile closed his eyes, mulling it over for a long moment before a sigh escaped him. "For humanity, then."
"For humanity."
...
"No," Annie replied, her voice flat as she looked between Reiner and Bertholdt. Both of them were pinning intense looks at her for very different reasons.
"You have to, Annie," Reiner stressed, his lips pressing into a thin line while his hands curled into fists. "Can you imagine what the Devils will be capable of with his power? It could lead to the restoration of their evil empire. They could conquer the whole planet once again!" He stressed in a loud whisper, glancing over his shoulder as he spoke to make sure that they weren't overheard.
"Then you fuck him and get knocked up," Annie shot back with a low hiss.
"Annie, I wouldn't ask this from you if I could," Reiner replied, and he genuinely meant it. And Annie hated him for it. Deeply and from the depths of her heart, she hated Reiner. He understood what he was asking of her. "But I can't. Only you can do this. We haven't found the Founding Titan, and worse, we don't know if the Devil King will carry out his threat because Galick arrived to save them."
Annie looked away, clenching her jaw as she gazed out at the gathering cadets, a week after Trost. Their assignments for the military branches had been delayed because of the attack. Because of the attack they did. If she looked at Reiner any longer, she'd shatter his jaw and knock out every tooth that he had.
They could have had a peaceful life but for his obsession with the damn mission…
"They can conquer the world, Annie," Reiner stressed. "You've heard the

rumors, just like I have. Wall Maria has already been retaken. Galick has killed every Titan inside. How long is it before they reach the shores of Paradis? Before they realize that there is a broader world out there? They'll beg him for protection. To slaughter their enemies. Slaughter us, and our families."
A refusal sat heavily on her tongue because she couldn't deny what he was saying. The situation behind the Walls had been completely upheaved. Galick, in the span of a day, had not only stopped their attack on Trost but reclaimed the territory they lost to Titans. In the six days since, all across the bastion of Eldians, people were rushing to resettle the lost land.
It wouldn't be long before the military asked him to secure the island, if they hadn't already. And it would be then that the Devils of Paradis would learn a truth that they had forgotten.
There was a world out there, and it wanted every single one of them dead in the most horrific way possible.
"But we have a chance. If you have his child, then we could raise it in secret to challenge him," Reiner finished. There were so many things she wanted to say to that. The words were in the back of her throat, weighing heavily on her tongue.
Would it really be so terrible to help them? It wasn't like the boot on the Eldians' throat was a kind one. They were kept in camps, forced to wear badges that made it clear to everyone what they were. They were treated as less than human by the world, all because of the actions of their ancestors. Why not help them?
But, like every time before, Annie swallowed what she wanted to say because of a simple fact.
They had broken through the Walls. Bertholdt kicked it down. Reiner broke through the inner gate. Annie had led the Titans to a feast of innocent civilians.
They had been ignorant then. Children. They didn't understand that the Devils of Paradis were completely ignorant of their history and the world abroad, their memories stolen with the power of the Founding Titan. That they were ordinary people just trying to survive, thinking that they were the last of humanity.
But they had known at Trost. And they still did it.
They were mass murderers. It was too late to change sides.
So, all she could do was carry out the mission that they were sent here to do. To find the Founding Titan and take it back from the Eldians of Paradis. To remove the bullet in the gun that they had pointed at the rest of the world for more than a century called the Rumbling. If she did that, she'd get to see her dad again. She could live out the rest of her miserable life in peace, right up until the curse took hold of her and some other sorry bastard had to eat her to become the next Female

Titan.
Something in her expression must have given because Reiner relaxed ever so slightly. "For the mission, Annie. For our home," he stressed.
"Regiment One-oh-Four! Take positions!" A member of the Garrison called out, and Annie took the chance to elbow Reiner in the diaphragm as she passed him by. All the plans they had made were going up in smoke. The plan had been to split up from here -- Reiner would go to the Scouts, Bertholdt to the Garrison, and Annie would go to the Military Police. It was why all of them had scored in the top ten for the cadet class.
She took her place at fourth, and there was a gap at her right for Eren Yeager. She supposed that it wasn't that much of a shock that he had been killed during Trost. He was skilled, but too hot-headed. Too filled with hate, he couldn't act calmly and rationally. Yet, her heart squeezed at his absence, knowing that his blood was on her hands. She had been determined to keep her distance from everyone, but when he demanded lessons on how to fight…
However, she was hardly taking his absence the worst.
Mikasa took her position at first in the class, and while Mikasa had always been cold… the air around her now was frigid. She stared ahead with a flat gaze and an apathetic expression, her hands clasped behind her back. If Mikasa ever found out that Annie was the Female Titan, that she had taken part in the attack on Trost… Mikasa would see to it that she died screaming, no matter what her intentions were.
"Cadets Mikasa Ackerman, Annie Leonhart, Sasha Blouse, Krista Lenz, and Ymir! Please approach the central tent! Your presence is required by Premier Zachary," the same member of the Garrison shouted out, and Annie swallowed a sigh. She could feel eyes on her back as the five of them stepped forward.
She followed behind Mikasa, followed by Sasha, Krista, and Yimir. It was Ymir who made a remark once they were out of earshot, "So, the rumors were true."
The rumors being that the military was building Galick a harem.
It was hard to hide given that Galick openly stated his intentions before a crowd. But, following that, a transfer here and there from the Scouts, Military Police, and Garrison? All of them female? It was pretty clear what was going on behind the curtain. It was only a question of how they were chosen and whether they made the cut.
They marched to a building, and in the lobby of it, behind a desk, was the senior-most military leader within the Walls. Premier Zachary.
He was one of their potential leads on who inherited the Founding Titan. Early on during their stay behind the Walls, they learned that the ruling family was a puppet. A mask for the real royal family. They had a list of possibilities, but Premier Zachary was at the very top of that list.

It was a position of extreme power, and from the other rumors going around about how the military was taking power…
"Cadets," Premier Zachary greeted them, his hands interlocked as he glanced at each of them. On command, they saluted him -- offering their hearts to humanity. It was a sick and twisted joke, and she thought it every single time she gave the salute. "I suspect you know why you have been called here."
"Because you want us to fuck an alien?" Ymir voiced after a beat of silence, none of them wanting to be the ones who spoke up.
To his credit, Premier Zachary inclined his head to her, and his expression didn't change. "Essentially, yes." He lowered his hands and looked each of them in the eye, "A new branch of the military is being created, and you have been selected as potential recruits. All of you are placed in the top ten of your class, which is the cut-off point for recruitment. And, like all branches of the military, you have the option to refuse and select another branch."
That was a very fancy way to describe military prostitution.
"Duke Galick requires women to prevent the extinction of his species. As such, this branch of the military will be dedicated to the preservation of his species," Premier Zachary continued, and it didn't sound lost on him what he was describing. "Should you accept this invitation, it comes with numerous longstanding benefits."
He adjusted his glasses, meeting their flat stares. "Your salary shall be doubled outright, with potential for promotions determined on various factors that will be revealed at a later time. Moreover, should you produce a child with Galick, you shall be ordained as nobility. A barony of your choosing will be allocated to you, with additional plots being offered the more children you have with him. These are a standard, and will be retained should you choose to retire or transfer to a different branch."
Annie had to give it to him -- he was really trying to sell this as a legitimate branch of the military and not government-sponsored prostitution.
"... What about the children that we have with Duke Galick…?" Krista questioned in a soft and uncertain voice.
"For all intents and purposes, they shall be considered Saiyans -- Duke Galick's species. They will be his to raise in accordance to his people's ways… however, he has been very receptive to the idea of the mothers of his children having a connection to them." There was a way that he said that which made Annie's hair rise. She could almost see his intentions, as if they were bare before her.
They were planning on using Galick's kids against him. Clever. But, just like Reiner, Annie got the strong impression that they were underestimating Galick.

As there was simply no way that he didn't understand that this was their one way to deal with him. Humanity couldn't hope to fight him, but another Saiyan?
He'd see it coming a mile away.
But admittedly, Annie was uncertain what other card they had to play.
"So, we can pop a couple of kids out, then walk away as a baroness, huh?" Ymir remarked, sounding rather casual about it. "And if he takes a liking to us, he might even put a ring on our fingers. How about that, Duchess Krista," she said, bumping her hip against the tomato red Krista. She was far more at ease with the idea than Annie expected.
"Question!" Sasha blurted, raising her hand up. "If we go to this branch of the military, will we have to fight Titans? Will there be banquets?"
Premier Zachary blinked at the question. "You will not be expected to fight Titans, no. And I suspect there will be banquets almost every day. According to Duke Galick, Saiyans require a great deal of food, and I have personally seen him consume a feast fit for twenty men and call it a snack." That was certainly an image.
"I accept!" Sasha declared, taking a step forward with a dignified expression on her face. As if she were thinking with anything other than her stomach. Annie sucked in a sharp breath because of it, her hands curling into fists behind her back.
She had half hoped that no one would accept. That way, she wouldn't stand out if she refused.
"Premier Zachary? Is this… I… is this how I could best serve humanity?" Krista asked, and that made him close his eyes for a moment. Like he had to brace himself to give the answer.
"It is," Premier Zachary confirmed, opening his eyes once more. "With Duke Galick, humanity has the potential to expand beyond the Walls. The Titan threat is mitigated with his mere presence. There will never be another Trost or Shiganshina. There can't be, because of him."
"Beyond the Walls?" Mikasa whispered under her breath, and Annie only heard her because they stood next to each other. Something hardened in her gaze that Annie saw. Then, louder, she spoke up. "Is the military looking to leave the Walls behind? To expand?"
Premier Zachary offered a single nod of his head. "Yes, it is. While we are not yet ready for it -- the reclamation of the lost territory will need to come first, but within five years, it is our intention to expand beyond the Walls for the first time in our history." Damn Reiner. Damn him for being right.
"I accept," Mikasa voiced and that was a gut punch that Annie hadn't at all anticipated. Everyone knew that Mikasa was obsessed with Eren. She wore that red scarf in the height of summer just because he gave it to her when she was a kid. She was the very last person that Annie expected to agree to this, and she had really counted on Mikasa

refusing so she wouldn't be the odd one out.
"I accept too!" Krista swiftly followed, snapping off a picture-perfect salute as she did so.
Ymir offered a small shrug, "If my Krista is going, then I'm going to."
Damn it. Damn it. Damn it all. She could refuse. It wasn't like it would be suspicious that she'd rather go to the Military Police and kick up her feet for the rest of her career rather than be treated as a broodmare. Yet, all the same, Annie understood the risks. The costs. It wasn't enough that she was demanded to become a mass murderer. She was being made a whore as well.
"I accept," Annie agreed, keeping how she truly felt out of her voice with practiced ease. The five of them gave the affirmative. Galick's harem would gain five more members. She tried to convince herself of the positives. The barony wouldn't be worth a damn thing. But, in a month, they would be due to meet with Zeke, the Beast Titan, for an update on their progress.
Annie would be snuck out of Paradis… and then she could go home. She'd have the brat, and hopefully she'd never have to see it before she'd be free to live out the remainder of her life in peace.
Premier Zachary stood up and, wordlessly, he snapped off a salute with his fist over his heart. He didn't say a word simply because there was nothing left to say.
…
"So Jean and Marco went to the Military Police?" Sasha asked, kicking her feet back and forth inside the carriage the five of them were squeezed into. Annie managed to get a window seat, so she could watch the terrain go by with a dull expression. Already, Wall Rose was long out of sight as they approached what would become their home. Already, she saw signs of people pushing back the years of neglect. Roads were being rebuilt, weeds cut away, and buildings were being reclaimed. The Eldians within the Walls had sent out more than a hundred thousand people in an effort to stave off starvation from the loss of territory, but they still had a large population to refill the regained territory.
The entire thing was happening so fast that most people didn't really believe it was happening until it was.
"So did Bertholdt," Krista replied, her hands in her lap as she was forced into the center of the carriage with Ymir's arm draped around her shoulders.
Ymir snorted, "Did anyone go to the Scouts?" She asked, and next to Annie, Mikasa answered as she too gazed through a window.
"Armin did," she said, sounding a bit sad about it. Eren used to go on and on about joining the Scouts, and Mikasa probably planned on following him. In contrast Armin didn't really seem like he was made

for it. It felt like a cruel twist of fate that he was the only one of the three that would actually be joining the Scouts.
"Connie and Reiner did too," Krista added. Connie was a surprise, Annie could admit. She figured that he'd join the Military Police, too. But, then again, the Scouts were suddenly a lot safer with the idea that Galick would be joining their expeditions. Reiner however, was taking his place as planned.
They were still hunting for the Founding Titan and the true royal family. The Military Police was the best lead in general, but the Scouts seemed to be picking up a lot more power with Galick's support.
"What do you think he's like?" Sasha asked, pursing her lips. Annie couldn't quite swallow the sarcastic bark of laughter that escaped her, earning the others' attention.
"A little late to be wondering that," Annie pointed out, making Sasha shrug.
"I mean, I know what we're going to be doing," Sasha defended. "And I've heard all about what he can do -- he's super strong, he can fly, and so on. But no one seems to know what he's actually like? Like, is he funny? Smart? Stupid?" That was… a fair point, Annie could admit. Still a little late to consider it though. "I suppose we'll find out," Annie replied with a small shrug, swallowing her own nervousness. She had a few days to prepare herself for it, but she wasn't the only one finding herself with cold feet as the mood immediately turned at her words.
At least until Sasha caught a glimpse of the place where they would be staying, and she half climbed over Krista to look through Ymir's window. "Ohh! That's a really big house! It's a total palace!" She noted, and Annie felt curiosity getting the better of her. Mikasa stared out her window, her expression not so much as twitching as they approached, but Annie had to wait until they arrived to look at it.
Sasha wasn't wrong. When Annie exited the carriage, she realized the building was a palace. Probably one inhabited by the former duke. The house was less a house and more of a full-scale castle -- it was made out of marble stone with several wings, and there were several lesser buildings that were framed around the main one that stood at six stories tall. The grounds were already carefully groomed with trimmed bushes and trees, and flower gardens planted…
It didn't seem like a bad place, Annie thought to herself. It looked like something ripped right out of a storybook, if you ignored the more subtle signs of neglect that were being tended to steadily. Before a large wooden double door were two members of the Garrison. Annie noted that they were both female.
Out of habit, they delivered a salute, which the two guards returned before one of them stepped forward. "My name is Maria," the woman in her mid-twenties introduced herself. Annie didn't recognize her, and the

name couldn't be assumed. Sina, Rose, and Maria were the three most popular names for girls in Paradis, after all. "I will be your commanding officer during your time in the Relief Regiment."
Annie had to resist snorting when she heard that. They really were trying to make it sound like a proper support regiment. Easier to swallow, Annie guessed.
"Follow me, soldiers. I'll give you a tour of the grounds and explain your duties along the way," Maria said, pushing the door to the castle open and leading them inside. The interior was cleaner than the exterior, if a bit bare, with the lavish decorations that Annie would expect either tossed out because of neglect or in the process of being cleaned.
"Physical conditioning will be maintained and combat readiness is demanded -- training times are up to you, but you will meet the mandatory twenty hours a week."
As they walked, however, Annie thought she heard a distant echo through the halls.
*Plap Plap Plap

other children. Or a mixture of both, if that is what you desire. Additionally, after your first child, you can take yourself off the rotation list entirely with your performance being subject to review every three years."
*Plap Plap Plap

eye, Annie saw Krista covering her eyes with her hands while her face was crimson. Even Mikasa wasn't immune to the sight that was put on display.
Galick was a powerfully built guy. Annie didn't get a particularly good look at him back during the Trost incident, but he was handsome. An angelic mixture of masculine and pretty boy, which was further highlighted by a jagged scar on his chest that went up to his collarbone. He was completely unbothered by his nudity, which gave them a full view of him.
His cock glissened with a sheen of cum, both his own and that of the two women that he seemed to have fucked into a comas. Their poor internal organs. No wonder Maria mentioned the rotation for rest. It was the size of a club, and even as it softened, it looked like something you could use to beat someone to death. Or fuck them to death.
There were worse ways to go.
"They just arrived, and I was giving them the tour, Duke Galick," Maria answered, presenting him with a towel that he used to wrap around his waist.
"Ah. My bad -- it's a pretty day, so staying indoors seemed like a shame," Galick replied, his tone casual and without any of the arrogance that Annie had prepared herself to deal with. "I thought you were arriving later. This wasn't exactly how I thought the introductions would go… but I'm Galick. A Saiyan Warrior. And Duke, I guess. But, I'd prefer it if you just called me Galick," He offered a lopsided smile, and it seemed strangely charming on him.
This was the man who completely upheaved everything. Who shattered every single plan that they had ever made.
It was irritating that she thought he was attractive.

Chapter 3

Absolute power in a negotiation, along with metaknowledge, competent allies and incompetent foes, was a delightful combination. It had been a month since that meeting where I got everything that I wanted, even if it was taking some time for the others involved to realize it.

Rod Reiss was the shadow king of the Walls. Only a handful of people knew it, chiefly the highest-ranked nobles, who were my 'fellow' dukes and the highest-ranked members of the Military Police. His only heir was Historia, or as everyone knew her, Krista, who was illegitimate… And was currently bouncing on my cock with the expression of someone lost in a haze of lust.

Her hands were braced on my abs, her fingers clawing invisible lines down them as she expertly shook her hips up and down my cock while behind her Sasha laid between my legs, licking my balls like there was a reward waiting for her after. Historia's petite build had a layer of muscle equal to all the others, her small breasts bouncing with every motion until I reached up, brushing my thumbs over her rosey pink nipples and felt her pussy clench down as she rode me.

Military training cultivated a certain kind of muscle and ability. It wasn't enough to just have strong core muscles. You had to be fluid and graceful, keenly aware of your balance and limbs. So, as it so happened, while Historia was initially a rather shy lover, she had all the skills needed to ride cock with the best of them, and she was showing them off now.

An amused smile tugged at my lips as I watched the heir to the throne ride my dick, shaking her hips with a maddened frantic pace as she chased another orgasm. Her stomach flexed as she rolled her hips, filling the room with the harsh sounds of flesh on flesh, which was joined by Sasha slurping on my balls like an object of worship. I'm sure her heritage would become relevant shortly -- bastard or not, she was the last one left within the Walls with royal blood.

With the shadow king removed, the other nobles began to panic. They lost their leadership, and the source of absolute power that they thought the royal family still possessed -- the ability to alter the memories of Eldians. And, naturally, when there was a power vacuum, they wanted to be the one to fill it. One of them might have come out on top, if it wasn't for one thing.

Dhalis Zachary.

When Dhalis had been introduced, he seemed to be a soft-spoken, no-nonsense man who was both competent and reasonable. He saw and understood Eren's value to humanity in a time of fear and uncertainty,

allowing him to join the Scouts. After that, he joined the coup d'état that was launched by Erwin and Pixis in canon.
Then the shit machine.
In probably one of the most jarring manga panels in Attack on Titan, Dhalis revealed that he didn't give a hoot about humanity. He joined the rebellion because he hated the nobility, and he had them hooked up to a machine that would make them eat through their ass and drink their own piss for the rest of their days. He ranted and raved about having them be the centerpiece for parades, and how the contraption was the single most beautiful thing he had ever seen.
So, I knew my audience when I made that display and dropped some less than subtle hints.
With me supporting the coup, it was a guaranteed success. Dhalis was motivated by spite, Erwin was motivated by the desire to learn the history the nobles had hidden from them, and Pixis wanted progress and stability. Nile, the commander for the Military Police, was something of a wild card, but between me killing Rod Reiss, the shadow king, and the power vacuum that resulted from it? Even if he wanted to do something about it, his options were limited.
"Ha… ha *hngh*…~" Historia moaned, her hips shaking frantically as she neared another orgasm. My hand went up from her breast to her neck and then to her cheek. Almost absentmindedly she began to suck on my thumb when it traced her lips. Her tongue lapped at the digit, sucking that much harder when my other hand went to her ass, groping the soft but firm flesh before delivering an encouraging spank to it.
I could feel her impending orgasm as her pussy clenched down rhythmically, squelching wetly as strands of her arousal clung to her soaked pussy. Gently, I guided her hips with the hand on her ass, delivering every thrust of her hips with a little more force. Her breathing hitched at that a split second before she moaned loudly around my thumb, her hips hitching as she came around my cock. Her pussy clenched down in a vice, trying desperately to milk me, but Saiyan endurance wasn't to be underestimated.
As she came, her pussy sputtering with arousal that dripped down my cock, I reached back to her blonde hair and pulled her in for a dominating kiss. My tongue invaded her mouth and plundered it, and she moaned in response. Her body trembled like a leaf, her hips twitching and bucking against me as she rode out her orgasm.
Breaking the kiss, I lifted her off of my cock as I began to fly off the bed, making Historia mewl in displeasure, right until she realized what I was doing.
Changing the position, I folded my arms under her legs, putting her in a full nelson, with her legs pointed up to the ceiling. Slowly, I impaled her again, earning a hitching moan from her still quivering pussy. She took

it all the way down to the base, and Sasha wasn't idle. She moved, kneeling down before us, before she stuck her tongue out, knowing what was coming.

With Historia firmly in the hold, I hammered into her with powerful thrusts. Each one was rewarded with a delicious moan as her twitching pussy fought to keep me buried to the hilt. My balls began to tighten, and I didn't try to stave off my orgasm. And I was reminded how wild a thing it was that sex felt *almost* as good as fighting to me now as I delivered a final thrust before coming undone inside her.

"Hnnngh~!" A moan that sounded like it belonged to a porn star ripped from her throat as the first rope of cum flooded her womb and filled it to the absolute brim. The second burst spilled from her pussy, flowing down my cock and balls like a river and into Sasha's waiting mouth and lapping tongue.

I was certain that Historia was already pregnant. Meaning that by the time her status as the Heir was discovered, if it wasn't already, she was already going to be carrying my child -- a Saiyan hybrid with royal blood flowing through their veins. Which would be important when it came to interacting with Ymir in the Paths, as she would only obey those with royal blood.

Historia was a twitching and quivering mess, her breathing hitching as she felt every powerful blast of cum slamming at the door to her already stuffed womb. Not a drop was wasted thanks to Sasha, but Historia was done for the day. So, using a bit of Ki, I extracted her from my cock and a flood of cum erupted from her gaping pussy, spilling into Sasha's waiting mouth. She didn't get all of it, so it dripped down her chin and onto her breasts, over her abs, where it was then caught by her cupped hands.

Sasha's gluttony was the thing of legends, and even without trying, it was one of the most erotic things I had ever seen. Placing a hand on her head, I guided my cock into her tight throat, and finished dumping the rest of my orgasm into her waiting stomach. Her nose touched my stomach, and her tongue emerged from her mouth, lapping at my balls like she could coax more cum from them. Her face was a mess of cum and spit with thick sticky strands connecting her mouth to my cock as I pulled out of her throat.

Sasha looked up at me in a daze before a belch erupted from her, her stomach as full of cum as her pussy was. She brought up her hands that were full of cum that had dripped down her body, drinking it down, before licking her hands clean. Then, without warning, she fell backward, passing out asleep with her legs spread out wide.

"What an honest woman," I muttered with a chuckle, casting a glance at Ymir, who was face down, ass up on the bed in a similar state as Historia and Sasha.

Telekinesis wasn't exactly simple, but it wasn't complicated either. By infusing things with a little ki, I could move them around by manipulating that ki. So, I was able to lift Sasha to the bed with minimal difficulty, leaving her sprawled out next to Ymir and Historia. As time had proven, they would be out of it for a couple of hours, and they wouldn't be waking straight until the end of the day.
Cleaning myself off, I got dressed in my Saiyan attire, just without the armor as there really wasn't a need for it. Grabbing my scouter, I fixed it to my ear before leaving the room. There, I saw a red faced Mikasa, who wouldn't meet my eyes.
"Dimo Reeves has arrived," Mikasa muttered, falling in step behind me.
"Ah. Did I keep him waiting long?" I asked, glancing at her, and adorably, her face reddened further.
"Two hours," Mikasa confessed. "It seemed… unnecessary to interrupt," she added. Meaning for the past two hours, she had been listening to me railing her squadmates. "I tried to knock, but… it might have been lost in the… moaning." True. Ymir was a screamer.
And she was far easier to handle than her namesake. The Ymir in the Paths, the one that first started this mess… I barely wanted to think about her. She was a headache and a half. This Ymir, inheritor of the Jaws Titan? Fuck her into oblivion with Historia, and she was happy as could be.
"Well, it'd be rude to keep him waiting any longer," I said, striding through the halls of my home. My castle. Sure, it was missing some of the amenities that I loved, like electricity, but it was still a castle and it was mine. As we walked, I noticed Mikasa shooting me a less than subtle glance and I answered it by cocking an eyebrow.
She seemed a bit hesitant before speaking, "The Survey Corp expedition you're going on… you allowed Hange and Nanaba to join it. With you," she noted and I nodded.
"Yeah? S'not like I'm going to let anything happen during the expedition, so there doesn't seem like there's any harm? Why? You wanna go too?" I asked her, knowing what she was getting at. Her expression immediately brightened, and she offered a sharp nod. "Sure thing. We'll head over to Shiganshina after the meeting."
"Thank you, Galick," she murmured in reply. I could tell that she was looking forward to it.
The 'Relief Regiment' tried to put things to a schedule, but the reality of the situation was that just about every woman in the Regiment was already pregnant. Historia, Ymir, Sasha, Hange, Rico, and a dozen others who had been transferred over from the branches of the Military.
All except Mikasa and Annie. I hadn't touched either of them sexually. And neither of them seemed to know what to do with that.

"Of course," I replied, thinking nothing of it. Annie, I was holding off on because of her allegiance to Marley -- I had no doubt that she'd run off the moment she realized she was knocked up. Mikasa, on the other hand… I was holding off for a couple of reasons.

A month was a lot of time to get the hang of my new abilities. My scouter was still connected to my Attack Ball, so I had remote access to the data on it. I was refamiliarizing myself with the basics, which were geared towards children fresh out of the 'incubation pods' rather than fully fledged warriors like the previous owner of this body had been. But, honestly, the idea of a Saiyan-Ackerman hybrid was a cause for concern.

An Ackerman, to quote, 'manifested the power of a Titan in their body and through the Paths gained access to all of their ancestors' skills.' That sounded like a *very* dangerous combination with Saiyan blood. Dangerous enough, it got my heart beating a few ticks faster at the mere thought.

On this planet, I was unchallenged and unchecked. While I had plenty of ideas and plans to abuse my Saiyan biology with the aid of metaknowledge, I had a feeling that if any child of mine could surpass me before I was ready, it would be whatever children I had with Mikasa. And that was something of a concern because I knew that Erwin and all the others intended to use my kids against me.

They wanted to raise them as humans and to value humanity over their Saiyan heritage. The plan was as obvious as it was predictable. It was a trope as old as time, and I had learned my lesson from Star Wars and Darth Vader.

So, I was waiting. And in the meantime, I was warming her up to the deed itself. I had been pleasantly surprised that she joined the Relief Regiment, as I figured she'd go to the Scouts. But I was under no delusion that she was over Eren, who she thought was dead and not in hibernation on the dark side of the moon. I'm not sure if she'd ever 'get over' him, per se, but I was hoping that a kind touch here and there, leading up to our having a kid or three, could help her move on.

Mikasa followed in step behind me, her blush fading as we reached my office. Pushing the doors open, I saw Dimo Reeves of the Reeves Merchant Association. He was a short man with thinning hair and a thin beard, who stood ramrod straight at my abrupt arrival before going absolutely bloodless the moment he saw Mikasa behind me.

"Sorry about the wait -- Something came up and it was rather urgent." By that, I meant I saw Historia, Ymir, and Sasha in their training gear.

"Of course, sire! I understand and I serve at your leisure," Dimo replied, gladly taking a seat when I gestured to one, his legs half giving out from underneath him as he carefully avoided Mikasa's gaze.

They had met during Trost with Dimo blocking the one exit out of the

district with a wagon full of food. He did so because of the food shortages that followed the fall of Wall Maria. It took Mikasa threatening to kill him to get him to move the wagon and allow the evacuation.
"What brings you by?" I asked, taking a seat behind a carved wood desk, pretending that I didn't already know.
Dimo swallowed thickly, but he wasn't the head of one of the largest merchant associations for nothing. It just took him a moment to put on his poker face. "The ore deposits that you told us about… they're there. The veins are rich and it's all high quality. Thirteen spots, thirteen hits."
"How lucky," I replied, a smile in my voice. It was anything but luck.
I had underestimated the amount of recon the Saiyans had done on this world before sending me here. There were geographical surveys that extended all the way down to the core of the planet that noted and categorized every single resource, ranging from basic iron, copper, and aluminum to rarer metals and minerals.
In particular, what the natives of this planet called iceburst stone. A mineral that, when removed from freezing temperatures, would produce a gas that they harvested for their ODM gear. It was a great source of propulsion.
The surveys also noted potential resources like iron bamboo trees, which were bamboo trees that, when melted down, produced an iron-like metal that could then be refined into what the locals called 'ultrahard steel'. Which was not only lighter than normal steel by half, but also had almost twice the tensile strength. However, chief among all the natural resources of this world was the Titan hardening crystal. The stuff was harder than diamonds, a twelve on the hardness scale. But, there was only one substantial deposit on the planet -- the underground cavern that King Fritz had created for the Titan eating ceremony.
There was a reason I had been sent to the island of Paradis. It was ultra dense with resources, and as far as the Saiyan race was concerned, I could enslave the population behind the Walls to mine and refine the resources that would fuel my empire.
"I suspect that luck doesn't have a damn thing to do with it, but a merchant understands the value of trade secrets, Duke Galick," Dimo replied with a hollow sounding chuckle. "As agreed, I'm whipping up recruits to work in the mines. There are plenty of volunteers. Especially with some of your… revolutionary ideas."
By that, he meant the notes I was crimping from the Industrial Revolution. Assembly lines, machine automation, and the like. Despite my concerns, technology behind the Walls wasn't full-on medieval. They had some notable industries, like an entire city that was dedicated to metal refinement to produce all of the equipment used by

the military. They had steam engines, but they were the first version of them, often used as water pumps for mines that got flooded.
They didn't have electricity, though. Not even behind Wall Sina.
All of the more advanced technology they did have was geared towards the military. Which was something that I was exploiting like a motherfucker.
"They get the job done," I replied with an ambivalent shrug, going for an air of aloofness. Paradis was primed for an Industrial Revolution, frankly. They had a small population with a limited amount of space, even after they killed a fourth of their population in the aftermath of Wall Maria's fall. Yet, there was an ever-increasing workload that needed to be done. If it wasn't for the former royal family actively suppressing technological development to prevent people from leaving the Walls, they probably would have had one already.
"That it does, sire," Dimo said with a bow of his head. He wasn't going to question it. Not when he was making money hand over fist. "This past month, I've made more money than I have in twenty years of being a merchant. It's an explosion of wealth like I've never seen before." And he had the decency to admit it.
"So, you would say that you're satisfied with our arrangement?" I asked with a little smile that grew when the man bowed his head to me.
"Of course, sire! I can't imagine myself being more satisfied with our progress," he replied, quick to butter me up. I'm not sure if it was more because I was a Saiyan Warrior or a Duke that got him so ready and willing to kiss ass.
"You're a merchant, Dimo. Be greedier," I admonished him, and when he looked up, I saw a hunger in his eyes. There it was. Dimo, in the manga and anime, had redeemed himself from his initial impression by helping the Survey Corp. But he was still the man who had been willing to exchange hundreds of lives for the supplies getting through the gate. He was a man who could look a crowd of terrified people in the eye and tell them that the supplies mattered more.
Just because you were on the side of the angels didn't make you one.
"What do you have in mind, sire?" Dimo questioned, and he couldn't hide the greed in his voice. He barely paid Mikasa any mind now, his mind consumed by the thought of profits.
"The Reeves Company is one of the largest merchant groups in the inner wall. Make it the largest," I instructed, making his eyes narrow a fraction. "The Reeves Company will receive an additional ten percent discount on the products coming out of my factories, wholesale." I was already giving the man a twenty percent discount as it was. Thirty percent was a big chunk of change, but money was effectively worthless to me. It might as well be Monopoly money.
No, that wasn't exactly true. It would be more accurate to say that I was

exchanging Monopoly money for influence. Soft power.

To Dimo's credit, he saw what I was doing. He just didn't care because I had picked *him* to do the legwork for me. "I know a few smaller players that we could either bring into the fold, or kick the legs out from underneath. The Vayne Company… I'm already chipping away at their textiles with your 'industrial looms.' I can fold them and roll them up with this."

"Do it," I ordered easily, making him bow his head and take that for the dismissal it was. He didn't even glance at Mikasa on the way out, though he did seem keenly aware of her presence as he half fled the room.

I could sense Mikasa's questions as she stood next to me, so I favored her with a smile. "Wondering why I'm working with a snake like that?" I asked for her, and Mikasa offered a single curt nod. "It's because I had him in my grip. With the reclamation of Wall Maria, Trost is isolated since they haven't asked me to unblock the gate. He and his company were going to miss out on a gold rush during the resettling, so it made him pliable to my needs."

Mikasa wasn't stupid, but I could tell that she didn't really get it. "Why?" The question was more loaded than she realized, and one I'm not entirely sure I should be honest in answering.

"I'm not human," I said, and the segue clearly puzzled her. "I am a Saiyan. To be a Saiyan is to demand progress in all things. Every day, I train because I *need* to improve my physical abilities and my skills. The land given to me is mine, and it will be excellent. It will fully harness its potential, and to do that in an acceptable timeline, I need to make use of men like Dimo."

It had been a plot point in the manga, but industrialization didn't happen overnight. It took time. In the manga, they estimated that it'd take thirty to fifty years before the technology of Paradis caught up to the rest of the world, and they militarized enough to resist them if it came to war. And based on my own estimates, that was more or less correct. Which is why I was helping them along even as I helped myself.

My interests lie beyond Paradis. I wanted to conquer the whole damn planet.

The Attack Ball had the solution. The tech-tree inside it had all the steps necessary to turn cavemen into a space-faring civilization capable of leaving their native star system to colonize the stars. In that tech-tree, I had identified several technologies that I could rush to make Paradis a military and technological powerhouse which wouldn't take too much advancement from their current tech level.

For now I was preparing the industrial base and facilities to produce those breakthrough technologies. Additionally, I was solidifying my

own power base against Dhalis and Erwin, and everyone else who wanted to sweep my legs out from under me. I presented plenty of incentives for migrants to move back into my territory, and even if I wasn't, there was a massive influx of people simply because I was *me*. I was the one who could effortlessly kill Titans.

People wanted to be close to me to feel safe. Things had been bad after Shiganshina. And just as the dust began to settle and people started to move on… Trost happened. People were scared, and they flocked to the one place that seemed secure -- my territory.

That gave me influence. Soft power. It was one thing for Dhalis or Erwin to try to kill me, to try to turn my children against me, to plant spies in my castle, or even steal a load or three to knock up some girls that were out of sight in the hopes they could raise the resulting children without my presence. However, the very humanity that they were trying to protect and serve flocking to me? That would be something that they would have to take into account with all of their plans.

That humanity would choose me over them.

"I understand," Mikasa replied, offering a small nod, and I think that she did. "Potential is worthless unless it's harnessed."

That got a grin out of me, "Exactly." I stood up and cast a glance through one of the windows. "It's about time for the expedition," I noted, seeing that it was midday. They didn't need to, but the Scouts insisted on leaving at the same time they usually did. That way, they could travel a bit during the day, but make the most progress during the night when the Titans went inactive.

Mikasa immediately perked up, "I'll put on my gear," she said, snapping off a salute before leaving the room. I watched her go, and once the door was closed, I pressed a button on my scouter.

Sure enough, there they were.

Two Titan Shifters, heading for Paradis.

Now was the time, I thought. I took in a slow breath as I focused on my ki. I felt it condense in my center, spreading throughout my body… and then I split it in half. The ki left my body, taking shape and almost fading into existence, I stood before myself.

The Multi-Form Technique.

"Still can't copy the scouter, huh?" My clone observed, holding out a hand to take it when I passed it to him. Honestly, calling him a clone was a little bit of a disservice. He was as much me as I was. He could think for himself, act on his own initiative, and he had all my memories up to the moment of his creation.

He wasn't real. Not really. He was solid, and so long as he didn't run out of ki that I gave him, he could remain indefinitely, as far as I could tell. But, at this stage, he was just a mass of ki that acted like me.

So, he wasn't real.
Yet.
"Seems so. Clothes are simple, though. It might be a familiarity thing," I remarked, thinking about the multitude of cloning abilities in fiction. The clones didn't spawn naked, and neither did Tien when he used this technique. So, there had to be some kind of threshold of what got copied because my clone was dressed as I was.
"Something to work on," my clone noted, putting the scouter to his ear.
I had never understood how geared towards fighting the Saiyan race was until I became a Saiyan. Like, I *knew* it. Dragon Ball was one of my favorite settings with the Saiyans, bloodthirsty warmongers that they might have been, holding a special place in my heart. Any species that had a dozen transformations and power modifiers and the ability to come back stronger every time you got your ass beat could only be a species geared towards one goal -- to find someone stronger and punch them in the face.
But I didn't *understand*. Not until it clicked into place that Goku learning the Kamehameha by seeing it once or Vegeta learning how to sense ki just by learning that it was possible… those weren't flukes. They weren't examples of how insanely talented they were. That was just a Saiyan trait.
We saw something that could make us stronger, and we took it.
I saw the Multi-Form through a TV screen. I knew it was possible, so I spent a couple of hours figuring it out. Took me all of a day to recreate it. And over the past couple of weeks, I had been improving it for my future goals. Turning it into a knock-off Shadow Clone Jutsu was only the tip of the iceberg.
"Keep an eye on everyone since they're going to think I'm gone," I said, waving at myself as I left the office.
"I'm you, idiot," he replied, flipping me off behind my back as the door shut behind me.
A sigh escaped me, "I seriously can't believe that I sound like that." That was something I couldn't quite get used to. At least the new body was handsome. Shaking my head free of the distracting thoughts, I strode through the halls towards the front door. Annie turned the corner as I did, and she froze with uncertainty for the quickest of seconds.
Her gaze darted to the floor as she continued to walk, heading by me, but she didn't look up as she passed me by. Honestly, it was like she thought I was going to eat her or something. Her reasons for being here were clear enough, and it was obvious that she wasn't happy about it.
So, I walked by her without saying anything and walked out the front door. I killed time for a few minutes doing warm-up stretches until Mikasa emerged from the castle with her ODM gear. Her gaze flickered

over me, noting the missing scouter, but she didn't seem to think much of it. She had no reason to when everyone was ignorant of what it did. However, she also noted something else.
"How are we going to reach Shiganshina?" She asked, glancing around for the carriage.
"Do you even need to ask?"

...

'*Eren would be jealous*.' The thought came to Mikasa unbidden as she looked down at the ground passing below at speeds that were dizzying. She was in Galick's arms, who shrouded them with a shimmering white aura of the energy that he called ki. Because of that she could barely feel the wind on her face despite the high speeds they were moving, , letting her see the world pass by as they flew towards Wall Maria.
The thought made her heart ache as if someone had reached into her chest and squeezed it. Even a month later, his absence felt like a raw wound on her soul. He had talked about his love for ODM gear, beyond its utility to kill Titans. The sense of freedom that it seemed to give him was unmatched. But, to see Galick truly fly through the air like a bird? He would be green with envy. She could almost see his face in her mind.
Mikasa watched the terrain go by, her gaze drifting towards Shiganshina. Her hometown. It was still abandoned, and it had felt so very empty when she visited it some weeks ago. To her immense regret, the rock that landed on her home had shifted over time, causing the basement to cave in. Nor had she found the remains of Carla, the mother who took her in after her own had been murdered.
Then her gaze drifted upward, to Galick. Part of her wanted to hate him at times. When she lay her head to rest, all the thoughts that she tried to keep down surfaced -- why hadn't he arrived earlier? He could have saved Eren. If he had just landed and shown up a little earlier, then Eren would be alive, and it wouldn't feel like someone had hollowed out her chest where her heart used to be.
It wasn't his fault, Mikasa knew. He came as soon as he was able, and he saved her from certain death. He didn't have any control over when he landed. His Emperor had charted the course and controlled when and where he landed. If he had sent him somewhere else, another part of the 'planet' as he called it? Humanity might have fallen.
"That's a pretty serious expression. Don't like flying?" Galick remarked, cocking an eyebrow in her direction and Mikasa found herself looking away.
"... I do," Mikasa admitted. "Can all of your people fly like this?" Would her... child be capable of this? This kind of... freedom? To effortlessly fly over the walls that had dominated her and everyone else's lives?

"All the Warriors can," Galick answered easily. "I'm not sure about the Support-Class, though. Planet Vegeta had way more intense gravity, and they ended up in the Support-Class in the first place for being pretty weak." He had spoken little of his people and his culture over the past month. Snippets of information revealing an entirely new world. In the truest sense of the words.
How their society was broken up into classes determined by power -- Support-Class being the very weakest, and it was composed of laborers. Then the Low, Mid, and High-Class were all warriors that were divided by something called a 'power level.' Then, the Elite-Class was reserved for the royal family.
He freely acknowledged that his people prized might over all. And that it could very well be the reason why he was amongst the last of his people.
"Could… I?" She asked, not really expecting an answer.
"It's possible. Saiyans can instinctively use our ki. It's possible that you could learn to sense it through exposure," Galick offered, but he sounded somewhat doubtful. That was fine. She would be content that her children would have access to such a gift.
A question burned on the back of Mikasa's tongue, but she swallowed it down with what felt like practiced ease as she fought the blush that threatened to creep up her neck. She wanted to ask why he hadn't… why they hadn't…
Joining the Relief Regiment had been a spur-of-the-moment decision, and one that she wasn't sure if she regretted or not. All she had cared about in that moment was that Galick could free humanity from the Walls, just as Eren had dreamed of. That he could slaughter the Titans, as Eren had wanted. In doing so, everything that Eren had wanted to see and do in life would have opened for them. They could see the seas of sand and find the oceans filled with salt…
Galick was the one who made that all possible. So, she decided to do whatever it took to enable him to do it. Convince him to. It hadn't sunk in until days later what she had agreed to do, but she accepted her duty. Only…
"Looks like we're right on schedule," Galick remarked, and Mikasa realized that they had arrived. Before the gate of Shiganshina, Mikasa could see the Survey Corp. All three hundred members, all making the final preparations for their departure. Her heart lightened at the sight as Galick brought them down.
All eyes were on them as they arrived, but-
"Mikasa!" Armin called out to her, breaking away from Reiner and Connie. His face lit up with a smile as he approached, and they embraced. "You're here! I knew Duke Galick was coming, but…"
"He decided to bring me with him. He knew going beyond the Walls

meant a lot to… me," she amended as they broke the hug. It meant a lot to Eren, not her. Mikasa had never once cared about what lay beyond the Walls, only that they were together. But, he was gone. So it was up to her to see all the things that he wanted to see.
Armin offered a pained smile, telling her that he saw through her answer. "For Eren," he said, holding her hand. That got a more earnest smile from her, and she squeezed in reassuringly.
"Mikasa! Yo!" Connie greeted her as he and Reiner approached. "Feel safer with you here already!"
"Connie. Reiner," she greeted them in turn as they approached. Reiner, however, only had eyes for Galick. He was speaking to Commander Erwin near the front of the gate that was blocked by a large stone. "Did they say what the purpose of the expedition is?"
Armin lit up, "To see the ocean!" He answered, unable to keep the excitement out of his voice. "According to Galick, we live on an *island*. With him helping us… We're going to measure the distance from the Walls to the water, and then plan further expeditions to measure the size of the island." Mikasa's breathing hitched at that, and she followed Reiner's gaze to the broad shoulders of Galick.
The sea. Something that Mikasa hadn't even believed was real- not really. They had read about it in Armin's book, but that didn't make it *real*.
"Looks like we're about to head out," Reiner muttered under his breath as they watched Galick fly over to the stone the size of a large building. There were final calls for everyone to mount up, and Mikasa was given a spare horse. She stuck with her cadet mates, watching alongside them as Galick began to push at the titanic stone.
Reiner sucked in a sharp breath, "It doesn't look real." He wasn't the only one with that opinion, as Galick seemed to roll the stone that blocked the gate out of the way with minimal difficulty. As soon as the stone was secured, held in place by Galick, Commander Erwin gave the order, and the Scouts left the Walls entirely, venturing into the unknown for the first time in years.
"... What's he like?" Connie blurted as they passed underneath the stone and through the gate that had loomed over her life as a child. The world beyond the Walls didn't look any different than the world within the Walls. The same grass, the same trees, the same plains and rolling hills. She hadn't expected it to, but she had hoped that it would have been… different somehow.
Mikasa thought of the past month she had spent in the castle. How Galick spent up to eighteen hours a day relentlessly training, sparring against foes that only he could see, or finding the heaviest thing that he could to work out with. The countless meetings that he had to redevelop the lost territories with a wide variety of people. And the

sounds she heard from behind closed doors… And sometimes from the balcony… and garden… floating through the air over the castle... The flushed faces of her comrades as they recounted their experiences with Galick's touch.
"He's kind," Mikasa settled on, looking over her shoulder to see that the stone had fallen back into place with Galick himself darting up over the Wall and flying over their expedition.
"I'm glad," Armin said, giving her a look that she knew how to read but didn't want to. Not when he was wrong about what he was thinking.
"We're lucky he is! Could you imagine what he could do to us if he were a bad guy?" Connie added, missing the silent conversation entirely.
"Because I can't. Actually, I don't even want to try to imagine. I'd rather face a Titan," he muttered with a shake of his head.
"The idea sounds like something out of a nightmare," Reiner agreed, looking up at Galick with a hard-to-read expression. It only tightened when the first Titan began to approach, some miles away. It was a complete non-threat to them, and wouldn't be for some time, but with the point of Galick's finger, that Titan simply vanished from the world with a flash of blue light.
It wasn't the first time she had seen him do it, but it was never going to be less amazing to see. The Titans, the creatures that had brought humanity to the brink of extinction, weren't a threat. They were beyond the Walls, a place of certain death as far as anyone was concerned, and Mikasa knew without a shadow of a doubt that every single one of them would return home.
There was nowhere safer in this world than beside Galick.
The trip went by with surprising speed. They rode in a straight line, Galick ensuring that no Titan came close to them. Before long, the sun began to dip below the horizon and they were forced to considerably slow their pace. Around the middle of the night, they stopped to set up a camp in the trees of a forest. Then in the morning they set out once more.
The pattern repeated itself for three days before Mikasa began to notice a change in the terrain. The air felt… wetter, while the land seemed drier. It was on the fourth day of traveling that the lush green grass, trees, and hills became replaced with a harsher landscape. The grass struggled to grow while the ground became more uneven with plenty of rocks. That slowed their pace as they could no longer gallop at full speed.
Then, two days later, that terrain too began to give way as sand started to sweep over the land in great mounds. Armin had started to cry when he saw it, and he cried again when he saw the great dunes of sand that swept up like the stationary waves that came from a stone thrown into a lake.

It was a week into their journey that they saw it.
"What… is that?" Armin muttered beside her, looking up at something that was distinctly unnatural.
"It looks like a smaller wall," Reiner noted, a certain wary grimness in his voice as he beheld it as they rounded one of the sides. He was right. The wall was made out of gray stone that wasn't dissimilar to the stone of the Walls. It wasn't anywhere near as big, just a hundred feet, if that, but still sizable.
"Maybe it's a barricade or something?" Connie ventured, glancing at them for support.
"Maybe," Reiner replied while Armin and Mikasa frowned at the wall as they rode by it. There was a feeling forming in her gut that she couldn't quite describe other than… dread. She wasn't certain why, but the walls presence filled her with unease. And it took her a moment to figure out why.
"Look at the ground," she said, pointing at the Titan tracks at the base of the wall. At first, it looked like a solitary set of footprints. A fifty foot Titan. But, looking underneath them revealed…
"There are hundreds," Armin breathed, looking fearfully at the layered and overlapping tracks. But, even as fear gripped him, his brow furrowed, "But some of these tracks look old. Very old."
"They're leading away from the wall. So, the Titans climbed over it?" Connie muttered, trying and failing to keep the fear from leaking into his voice.
"Maybe," Armin acknowledged. "But there's only one known reason for Titans to gather like this," he pointed out.
Humans. None of them dared to utter the words out loud, but given how all of their expressions tightened, they were all thinking the same thing. Mikasa found that she was bracing herself for what she was about to see, even if she had no idea what it was she was going to see. But, as they rounded the wall and galloped up a path… Mikasa couldn't have ever braced herself for the sight she was greeted with.
Blue. That was the first thought that rang through her head like a bell. It was bluer than the sky with a darker hue.
It moved constantly, like great invisible stones were being tossed into it, with the ripples washing onto the sand before retreating, only for another ripple to wash ashore. It stretched on for as far as she could see, over the horizon. Her breath was caught in her throat, her lips parting as she knew she was witnessing something incredible. The others were in a similar state of awe.
All three hundred members of the Survey Corp gazed out at the ocean, a profound silence falling upon them as they just drank the sight in. Until it was broken by Connie.
"What's that?" Connie questioned, pointing out something on the

horizon. It took Mikasa a moment to find what he was looking at, but when she did, she saw…
"It looks like a metal boat," Armin noted, cupping his hands over his eyes to get a better look. It was exactly as he described it. It had the same general shape as a river barge, only it was entirely made out of metal. Even at a distance, Mikasa could tell that it was by far the largest ship she had ever seen a dozen times over. The hull rose high above the waves, and there were what looked like some kind of building on top of it as large as a house, also made out of metal. There were also…
"It has cannons," Mikasa observed with a note of uncertainty in her voice. Then her heart lurched in her chest as the barrel-like protrusions on the deck of the ship began to swivel in their direction. Her breathing hitched, her eyes widening as several realizations crashed over her at once.
There were people beyond the Walls.
And they were about to shoot at them.
"Take cover!" Mikasa yelled, but even as she did so, she knew it was already too late.
A split second later, Mikasa heard the distant sound of a cannon firing just before the sound of impact. Mikasa braced herself for the impact, determined to protect Armin with her body, but the action proved entirely unnecessary. The cannonball never reached the cliff that they stood on.
Galick stood in the way, using his body as a shield. A single hand was raised up to catch the cannonball, and it flattened itself against his palm before warping around it. With a flick of his wrist, Galick sent the large chunk of metal into the lake below him.
"I'm gonna take that as an indication that they're not friendly," he remarked loudly, letting everyone hear him but the words were directed at Commander Erwin.
Mikasa looked to the Commander, to see his expression was unchanged as he looked out at the ship. He spoke calmly, but his voice carried. "You knew that they would be here," he observed, and that got a grin out of the Saiyan.
"Of course I did," he admitted freely. "I figured that they'd be more suited to answering your questions about the wider world. Want me to bring them ashore?"
"That would be appreciated, Duke Galick," Commander Erwin replied, and Galick offered a thumbs up before he flew off to the ship.
Next to her, Reiner began to tremble and he was hardly the only one. Armin was every bit as shaken up and muttered to himself, "What is happening? They're humans, right? Why would they just attack us like that?" He breathed, looking for an answer.

A memory flashed in Mikasa's mind. Of the day that had changed the rest of her life. The day when her peaceful life of ignorance to the world's cruelty came to an end with the murder of her father and mother.

"Just because they're humans doesn't mean we are allies," Mikasa found herself answering in a low tone as they watched Galick arrive at the ship. She wasn't sure what she really expected him to do, but in hindsight, it really should have been for him to dive underneath the water before lifting the ship up and flying towards the shore.

His strength was impossible, she wanted to say, even as she looked at an example of it. The ship only seemed to grow larger as it neared the island, measuring in hundreds of feet long. Galick seemed unbothered as he brought the ship to the shore, and it was only then that Mikasa noticed the dock that was on the other side of the Wall.

"Surround the ship!" Commander Erwin ordered, and they wheeled their horses around and raced down the hill as Galick flew over the wall with the ship in his hands. They cast a long shadow that Mikasa found herself lost in as Galick set the ship down near the base of the wall, leaving the Scouts to surround it with a half circle. They gave it a wide berth, and Mikasa could hear the sounds of panic coming from the ship itself.

Her grip on her ODM gear tightened, watching as men and women emerged on the surface of the ship, lining up on the railing with odd looking muskets. They took aim along the side of the ship, and Mikasa saw their faces. They were human and their expressions were of utter terror.

It was understandable given the circumstances. They had just been lifted out of the water, ship and all. Yet…

Their expression carried the same fear as those that saw Titans for the first time as they looked out at them.

"My name is Commander Erwin of the Survey Corp! Who are you and state your intentions!" Commander Erwin shouted out at the ship.

Mikasa heard Armin's breathing hitch next to her as they awaited the answer.

It took a few seconds for a man's voice to ring out. "I am Captain Lucus Terry, and I do not acknowledge the demands of the Devils of Paradis!"

Mikasa was taken back by the sheer visceral hatred in his voice. Mikasa was familiar with hate.

The Captain sounded like Eren when he spoke of the Titans. Pure unrelenting hatred that couldn't even be quenched by the death of every last Titan in the world. That's exactly what he sounded like when the Captain spoke of the 'Devils of Paradis.'

"I'm afraid you don't have a choice in the matter, Captain Terry!" Commander Erwin replied. "You are stranded on shore and surrounded.

I do not ask for your surrender. Only that we may have a peaceful conversation and then I will ask Duke Galick to return your ship to the sea, so you may be on your way."
There wasn't even a pause before the Captain replied, "You won't deceive me, Devil! Men! Ready your arms! We may have been dragged into hell, but we will take as many of them down with us as we can!"
The declaration was met with a roar of approval from those abroad and Armin was shaking his head ever so slightly.
"This can't be happening. We… we finally meet someone beyond the Walls and they…" He whispered underneath his breath, and Mikasa knew nothing could console him. She didn't know how to handle the situation any better, but now wasn't the time to deal with it. There was a fight before them, guns aimed at the few people that she had left to care about, and she was going to put an end to that.
If they were going to call her a Devil, then she would give them a reason to.
However, as the tension swelled with both sides waiting for the other to make the first move, two people approached the railing of the ship. A man and a woman. The man was tall with blonde hair and beard, wearing a pair of glasses. He seemed unconcerned with the situation. Far less so than the dark haired woman at his side, who barely came up to his shoulder.
The man raised a knife to his palm and confusion filled her when he dragged it down sharply. As he did so, he took a step off the railing and there was a flash of light that blinded her. The space between them and the ship became filled with light and noise, and Reiner reacted protectively, wrapping an arm around her throat and pulling her and Armin close together. He put too much strength into it, but the panic was getting to him.
She could understand when the light faded and in the space where the man had been now stood… a *Titan*.
It barely looked like a Titan. His body was covered in brown fur and he was oddly proportioned with long arms that almost reached all the way down to his feet. He was taller than a normal fifty foot Titan by a head. He looked more like an animal than a human.
The reaction to the sight was visceral -- a man had just become a Titan. Mikasa didn't know how to make sense of it. And, it was for that reason, she nearly missed the stinging sensation of a blade being pressed into her throat. It pressed against her carotid artery, making it impossible to dislodge before it could slit her throat.
"Galick!" Reiner roared up at the Saiyan, who flew before the Titan, his expression unbothered by the Titan's impossible presence. "Surrender now, or Mikasa and your child die!"
He assumed that she was already pregnant, Mikasa realized, turning

her head to glare at Reiner, who wore an expression of pure desperation on his face.
Armin backed up a step, recoiling like he had been physically struck. "Reiner? What are you doing right now? That's Mikasa. Galick is on our side… remember?" He tried in a weak voice, giving Reiner a pleading look.
Reiner, however, only had eyes for Galick, who turned in their direction. Yet, he still replied to Armin. "I'm the Armored Titan," he said so matter-of-factly that Mikasa thought she misheard him. "I was never on your side. I'm sorry."
The words were so genuine that they caught Mikasa off guard. Reiner was the Armored Titan and he was… sorry.
And for the first time, Mikasa was glad that Eren was dead. If he learned that, he would be devastated. He had been close to Reiner. Looked up to him. Admired him. Learning that Reiner, someone he knew and trusted, was the one who helped destroy Wall Maria?
"**Oh,**" Mikasa heard, and her attention darted back to the Titan, realizing that it could *speak*. "**You're here too, Reiner? That's good. I wouldn't mind an explanation on what just happened. What power do the Devils of Paradis possess that they can lift a fully manned battleship and carry it like a toy?**"
Connie and Armin both flinched badly, realizing that this was no misunderstanding. Reiner had betrayed them- no. He had never been on their side to begin with.
"It's him, Zeke! He's a Saiyan! He's the threat here!" Reiner sounded desperate and afraid even with her as a hostage. "Galick! Surrender right now! You don't have a choice! I'll kill her!" He roared up at him, and Galick's expression didn't change.
No. His eyes settled into a glare as he looked down at Reiner.
Mikasa didn't blink, but all of a sudden, Galick stood before them. Reiner's breathing hitched, pressing the knife harder into her neck. Reiner wasn't small by any means- he was taller than them both, but Galick seemed to tower over them. The whole area seemed to hold its breath, waiting for his reaction, and it was a painful few long seconds before he decided to break the silence.
"I have hostages of my own, you know?" Galick replied to Reiner's demands, and there was steel in his voice. It was the first time Mikasa had heard him sound serious. His tone was always casual or aloof, like he was laughing at a joke that only he understood. But now his voice carried a deadly edge.
Reiner gulped loudly, "They're soldiers of Marley! They're ready to give their lives, if it's asked of them!"
"Oh, I didn't mean them," Galick replied coldly, and there was something in his voice that chilled her blood. "Reiner. Did you know that there are

one point eight *billion* humans on this planet?"
That number didn't feel real, but he uttered it with such certainty that Mikasa found that she believed him. Reiner did too, based on how he tensed.
Galick leaned in, looking Reiner directly in the eyes. "If you don't remove that knife from Mikasa's neck, I'm going to murder every single one of them not on this island with my bare hands… just to make sure that I kill your family, Reiner."
It felt like a pit opening up in her stomach as she had the cold realization that Galick meant it. He'd carry out that threat. He would be the one to drive humanity into extinction. Galick had talked so ambivalently about his people -- how they were warriors and carved out an empire across the stars, but it was only at this moment that Mikasa realized what that meant. What Galick was capable of.
Reiner realized it too because she felt him freeze against her, staring hopelessly into Galick's eyes. Hoping desperately that he saw a crack or some sign that he wasn't serious, but all he saw was a harsh glare filled with intent. "You can't…"
"I'm not human, Reiner," Galick said, echoing something he had already said to her in a very different tone. "I'm a Saiyan Warrior. And you are dangerously close to learning the hard way what that means." His voice had a warning in it, and his gaze was sharp enough to cut. For a moment, Mikasa wondered if she was going to die. It felt like a distant thought, almost like it was happening to someone else.
Did she really survive Trost to die here?
Then, slowly, Reiner lowered the knife. The very moment she had space, Mikasa elbowed him in the stomach, lashing out at the knife to disarm him effortlessly, before sending him tumbling into the ground. Galick grinned at her -- it was a lot like a blade, curved and sharp -- before he raised a hand to Reiner's face, flicking him in the forehead with enough force that he was sent flying back. He rolled uncontrollably for a dozen feet before coming to a stop. Mikasa's hand went to her neck to find that it was bleeding, but she was fine. She nodded her thanks to him, and Galick finally turned his attention to the Titan.
It was strange, she thought as he approached carelessly. There was a ship filled with humans from beyond the Walls. Reiner just confessed to being the Armored Titan. There was a man who turned into a Titan before them. Yet, it was Galick's mere presence that had them all frozen with inaction. The Titan before them didn't dare interfere because he understood that as powerful and as dangerous as he might be…
He was nothing before Galick.
"Neat trick, big guy," Galick remarked, the deadly edge bleeding out of

his tone, and it was replaced with the same casual ease despite the tension. "I like it. I kinda want to see what you can do, but I know better than to get my hopes up with third-rate trash like you Titans. So, you going to surrender?"
The Titan looked down at Galick with an expression that was difficult to read because of how inhuman it was. But if she had to describe it, the Titan seemed pensive. His golden eyes flickered to Mikasa as Armin placed a bandage around her neck to stem the bleeding. And the very moment that he did, Mikasa saw a flash of blue.
A dark blue beam of light erupted from a pointed finger, and it consumed the entirety of the Titan's head and neck. The beam punched through the wall behind the Titan and the ship, as the beam itself struck what looked like some kind of tower. Everything that touched the light that barely lasted a second before it tapered off was simply erased. Completely annihilated.
Bonelessly, the Titan flopped forward, everything above the collarbone simply gone. Before he even hit the ground, steam rose from the corpse. The Titan was dead.
"I dislike being underestimated," Galick announced, as he blurred forward, landing lightly on the railing of the ship with his hands clasped behind his back. He landed before the dark-haired woman, who was staring up at him with naked shock. "So, now that you have a much better idea of what I'm capable of, I'll ask again -- do you surrender? I won't ask a third time," he warned, leveling a finger at her face.
The woman looked at the bead of blue pointed at her head and, slowly but deliberately, she raised her hands up in a gesture of surrender.
"Eldian dog!" The captain roared, "I should have known that you would betray us for your own kind! Men, fir-" Mikasa couldn't see it because of the angle, but faster than she could blink, Galick adjusted his aim and sent that bead of blue ki at the captain, cutting him off. And, based on the sounds of horror that followed, he was dead.
It was also followed by the sounds of wood and metal hitting the ground as they threw down their weapons.
"Secure the ship and the Armored Titan!" Erwin ordered, and despite her wound, Mikasa was quick to follow the order along with nearly three hundred others. They used the ODM gear to jump up to the top of the bridge, finding that there were hundreds of people that were on the deck. Every single one of them looked up at them with eyes filled with pure terror, many were openly weeping and trembling as the Scouts arrived.
Some even began begging for their lives when the Scouts secured them, taking their weapons and binding their hands. Every single one of them was utterly convinced that they were walking to their graves, or a fate worse than that.

The entire process was almost too fast, all because of Galick. The crew of the ship didn't dare to resist when he had effortlessly killed a Titan that had been on their side. Questions swirled inside of Mikasa as they took the crew captive and began searching the ship itself. And it felt like she had stepped into an entirely new world as she walked through the metallic halls.

Commander Erwin went to the command center alongside the woman who was with the Titan, along with Reiner. There wasn't any cause for concern, though, as Galick and Captain Levi were there with him. What they were discussing, Mikasa could only guess at. But she knew that the topic would decide humanity's fate. Or would it?

When the task was done, Mikasa found herself heading down the cliff to the sandbank that stretched along the coast. The trip was a short one, and she found herself alone as she waded into the waves that washed over her soft leather boots. She probably should have taken them off, Mikasa realized, but it was too late for that.

She gazed at the horizon for a long time, watching as the sun drifted down towards the great lake. After a while, she heard someone approach her from behind, and she spoke, "The sunrise and sunset aren't real within the Walls." She said, unsurprised that it was Galick who stood next to her, crossing his arms as they watched the sun set. "It only looks like them if you're far enough away, or if you're standing on one."

Eren hated that. Despised it. Even when they stood on Wall Rose for the first time, he had been full of a bitter poison while the others had been in awe.

"Is it all that it's cracked up to be?" Galick asked her, sounding genuinely curious, as if he had never considered it from that perspective. And he hadn't. Why would he? He was a being of absolute power in a world of the powerless. Even gravity didn't have a hold on him.

No. It wasn't.

Eren wasn't here to enjoy it with her.

"Beyond the horizon… are there really two billion people?" She asked, not answering his question. She didn't know how to. Not when the truth refused to leave her throat. Galick didn't seem to mind.

"Yup," He confirmed, and Mikasa had to take a steadying breath. Two billion people. That was more than everyone within the Walls… *hundreds* of times over. It was almost unthinkable. There was part of her that wanted to deny it, refusing to believe that something she had believed for the entirety of her life could be a lie -- that the people behind the Walls weren't all that was left of humanity.

Mikasa took in a deep breath, taking in the information and accepting it. The truth didn't change just because you found comfort in a lie. "And

those two billion people. Are they… like that? Do they…"
"Hate you?" Galick finished for her, and she nodded. "Yeah. They do." He answered so simply, like it was barely a concern.
"Then everyone beyond the sea is an enemy?" Mikasa muttered, finding herself… sad. It was a different kind of sadness than what had taken hold of her since Eren's death. It was more disappointment mixed with relief. If Eren were here, he'd be devastated. He had hated Titans even before he saw one for the first time or they killed his mother. He hated them because they stole his freedom and caged them in the Walls. He had wanted so desperately to break free of the cage he had been born into. Mikasa wasn't sure if he would be able to survive it if he learned what lay beyond the Walls was another cage.
"That's right," Galick confirmed for her, his tone merciless as he delivered the news. "As far as the world is concerned, you are the enemy. You are Devils. Evil incarnate and yada yada yada. The world won't be safe so long as you're in it, so they want you dead." Mikasa closed her eyes and focused on the last of the sun on her face.
The world was their enemy. Two billion people were their enemy. It didn't seem fair. They struggled so long against the Titans, and now they were facing a foe that seemed so much larger than them. The Titans were mindless beasts. No better than animals. Mikasa knew all too well that humans could be even more dangerous than the Titans.
"What do we do now?" Mikasa asked him, looking at Galick for the first time. His expression was unusually solemn as he watched the sun vanish beneath the waves.
"Realistically? You have two choices," Galick began. "The world hates you, and hatred is fundamentally irrational. They don't care that you're just trying to live your lives or that you mean them no harm -- they hate you, and while you may have some luck reasoning with some… Well, a person might be smart, but people will always be dumb."
Galick turned to her, and his intense gaze met hers. "Option one? You can submit to the world and accept its ravaging. Maybe there is an avenue of diplomacy that you can use to preserve some of your people. This island is rich with resources after all. It's half the reason why my ship landed here. Use that as leverage to negotiate a surrender and hope that the people who hate you don't betray the deal, but even then… some would be saved, but not all. Or even most."
"And the other option is that we fight," Mikasa reasoned, her hands curling into fists.
"Domination," Galick agreed. "You possess unique technology developed to fight the Titans. It can be retrofitted to fight humans for a significant advantage. You're at a disadvantage when it comes to population and the number of troops, but you can make up for it in quality. Additionally, I possess technology that can increase the

effectiveness of that advantage -- weapons and armor. You use that advantage to dominate the world and make it submit to you."
Mikasa searched his face, not entirely sure what she was looking for. But she found it all the same, "And you'll help us?"
"Of course," Galick answered, holding out a hand for her to take. She looked down at it for a moment, closing her eyes and feeling something that had been gripping her heart start to let go.
Reaching out slowly, she took his hand. She felt his rough hands under her own callused palm, squeezing it and finding comfort in his squeeze back. Mikasa offered him a small but genuine smile before she turned her head back to look out at the ocean, holding his hand all the while. They said nothing else to each other as the stars revealed themselves as they savored the moment of peace in a world soon to be at war.

Chapter 4

By replacing Eren in the plot, everything had changed. There was no expedition to trap the Female Titan, so Levi's team wasn't slaughtered. I killed Zeke and captured Pieck on arrival, so there was no false breach arc. Meaning characters like Mike Zacharias, Gelgar, and a lot of other members of the Survey Corp were still alive. The following mission to retrieve Eren from Reiner and Bertholdt, which cost the Corp half of their veteran fighters obviously never happened.

And there would be no mass slaughter by Zeke as he threw rocks like fast balls into a mass of charging men that have their lives to serve as a distraction for Levi to get close.

The Survey Corp was at full strength, having taken none of their canon losses.

Additionally, there was another factor at play. Kenny and his Anti-Personnel Taskforce -- some fifty Military Police elites that got massacred by the cadets. Now, normally, I'd write them off because they got killed by rookies three months out of training. But, given that those rookies were the protagonists of the show, it was kinda hard to really hold that against them.

In effect? The Walls had retained a mass amount of talent and skill that it would have lost in canon.

That mattered a fair bit when your plan relied on quality over quantity.

"Coexistence has been deemed impossible," Erwin Smith informed me, interlocking his fingers as he rested them in his lap. The changes to canon were so great that he still had both arms. "And submission is unacceptable. Which leaves us one option -- war."

The verdict was at long last delivered after months of deliberation and interrogation of the thousand prisoners. The decision itself was obvious and there was never any doubt about it. Even if you truly believed it would serve some bullshit like the 'greater good', rolling over to die was difficult to do. There was a reason why war was humanity's favorite pastime for thousands of years.

And the group that was delivering the news was a really interesting bunch. There were the usual guests in my office -- Erwin Smith, Dot Pixis, Nile Dok, and Dhalis Zachary. That wasn't so surprising.

What was surprising was who accompanied Nile.

Kenny Ackerman. Levi's uncle. They were in the same room together, and neither was trying to kill the other -- another flap of the butterfly's wings. With no Eren, there was no Founding Titan to fight over. Kenny's 'dream' of inheriting the Founding Titan to become a kind and compassionate person was dead in the water. Thus, there was no reason for them to fight as the world got so much bigger for both of

them.

Formerly Kenny the Ripper, who murdered more than a hundred members of the Military Police. Now works for them.

I'm actually a little disappointed that I missed their reunion.

"It took five months to figure that out?" I asked, tilting my head as I kicked my feet up on my desk.

"We decided to explore all possibilities before coming to this conclusion," Pixis answered. "While we hold out hope that this can be resolved peacefully… we must prepare for the reality at hand. If the sample size that we received of humanity beyond the Walls is any indication, we must at least prepare to defend ourselves."

Dhalis nodded gravely, adjusting his glasses. "It is an adjustment. Titans were our natural predator. We could not reason with them, so we had no choice but to fight and kill them. Fighting against humanity for survival is something that will take time to internalize."

I hummed, my gaze bouncing between faces. "And, naturally, I'm your trump card."

"Indeed," Erwin admitted easily. He was someone else I was curious about. In canon, he died before he was able to learn the truth of the world. I had been there in the room with him when he interrogated Pieck and Reiner. His reaction had been… interesting to observe, to say the least.

It was like seeing someone take a bite of ice cream cake, only to discover that it had been full of shit all along.

I hadn't been sure how he would hold up after the revelation, but months later he seemed as level-headed as ever.

"We are putting forth a plan," Erwin continued. "As of now, across the Walls, military training is mandatory between the ages of twelve and fifteen. Not all will be cut out for ODM gear, but they can serve humanity in other branches. Additionally, those who are already too old for ODM training will take supplementary training to serve as a reserve force in case we are attacked." Full military mobilization then? Good. That was exactly what I wanted from them.

"Large scale construction projects, as seen inside of your territory, will be implemented across the Walls," Pixis picked up. "According to our guests, we're rather behind the curve when it comes to technology. The former royal family was suppressing technological development, and it would seem the rest of the world has left us in the dust over the past century. Ships made of steel. Machines that can fly."

"However," Erwin resumed, "In the face of this new threat -- the nation of Marley, we have concluded that we can no longer be distracted by the Titans. As such, we ask that you eliminate the remaining Titans on

Paradis."
And there it was.
Little by little, I had been chipping away at their independence. I didn't need to make any major dramatic efforts either. Power was safety in this world, so people flocked to me and my territory like moths to the flame. The industrial base I had been building up for the past six months saw that I was exploiting the population effectively to produce goods that outpaced every single competitor within the Walls. Through the Reeves Merchant Company, I had made the Walls dependent on me for goods production, from food to textiles to military equipment.
It was impossible for them not to notice what I was doing, but they had very little recourse to stop me. And now they realized they were even more dependent on me than they had thought.
I and I alone could protect them from the world that wanted them dead. Just as I could easily deal with the Titans, so could I deal with the invading armies of Marley and the other nations under their boot.
A lone eyebrow rose up, and I didn't even need to say a word. It was that which made Kenny speak up.
"Ya' really going to make us beg for it? Like ya' don't already know? Please," Kenny spat, a cutting smile on his face as he pushed up his wide brimmed hat, "Like this wasn't yer plan all along. Didn't believe for a second that you were only sent here for some tail to squirt out a couple of kiddies. Ya' was sent here to conquer us from the very start."
"Of course I was," I admitted freely, and no one in the room seemed surprised, even if they did seem a little caught off guard by how easily I confessed. "The modus operandi of the Saiyan Empire is to open with mass slaughter until I hit that magic number that made you realize that you should give up and accept enslavement. If I went by that playbook, I would have wiped your capital off the map, along with Marley's and all the others."
"Yet, you didn't," Pixis noted dryly, a note of exasperation in his voice.
I nodded, "The Saiyan method is stupid." I'd looked through all the available records that the Attack Ball had over the last six months that I had spent on this world. A lot of it was stuck behind progress blocks, like my power level, or needing to develop a ship for solar travel, then interstellar, and so on. But, I could read enough to get a very clear picture of the Saiyan Empire. "The Saiyan race, after we accidentally blew up our native planet, managed to conquer a planet that belonged to an alien race that was stupid enough to save some of us. The Truffles."
A frown tugged at my lips. "They were an advanced race. Far more than us, and you. But, after about a century of loitering on their planet, we finally took it over. The Truffles were exterminated and their technology -- advanced medicine, space travel, weapons, and armor...

all of it was ours."
"There a point to this story or are you just bragging about being shitty house guests?" Levi asked me, leveling a flat glare at me.
"The next eight hundred and fifty years was an explosion of expansion. We went from star system to star system, conquering everything in our path. If those planets were occupied when we arrived? We would enslave them to exploit the resources of their planet. Those with military potential would be turned into disposable slave soldiers sent at the front lines to soften them up. Those that we couldn't find any use for? They were exterminated." I recounted the tale of the Saiyan Empire in a dispassionate and frankly irritated voice.
The only one that wasn't wearing a heavy expression was Kenny, as a smile tugged at his lips like he was laughing at a joke only he could hear. I shrugged it off as I continued, "Then, naturally, we hit a wall. We found rivals who could challenge us and discovered that the foundations of our glorious Empire were made of sand, because at the first sign of weakness, it crumbled. Slave revolts. Saiyans rebelling against the Empire, or declaring independence, or just cutting their losses and deserting."
I thought a lot about that message I had woken up to. Emperor Vegeta made it sound so simple and clean -- we were being hunted down and exterminated. I, and a handful of others, were the last remnants of the Saiyan race. But, I doubted that. What about the 'traitors and cowards' that fled? The whole thing started to reek after a couple of months of thinking about it.
An amused huff of laughter escaped me, "What took nearly a thousand years to build was destroyed in less than fifty. And we had it coming. The whole damn thing was so obvious that we were basically asking for it."
"I hope you don't expect a thank you for learning from the mistakes of your history," Pixis replied with a drawl, his expression tightening.
"Expect? Nah," I dismissed the idea out of hand. "But I would appreciate it. If any other Saiyan had come to your planet, you'd all be dead. They'd have wiped out humanity behind the Walls to present themselves as a savior to the rest of the world that's convinced you have a gun to their head. And that's just if they're smart. Most would have slaughtered half your population before you even realized what was happening."
"Instead," Levi replied in a tense voice that was just shy of accusatory. "You're exploiting our weakness and inability to defend ourselves."
"I am," I admitted without shame or hesitation. Wasn't a point in hiding it now. "I want Paradis to be the start of the foundation for a new empire. First this island, then this world."
"And you expect us to just go along with this?" Nile questioned, his

hands clenched into fists that trembled. There was rage burning in his eyes, and every word that I said seemed to stoke the flames higher and higher. "We can't kill you. I'll admit that. But that doesn't mean we have to mindlessly obey you."
To that, I tilted my head at him. "I never wanted blind obedience in the first place. And I don't expect for all of humanity to unite behind me. I'm sure you'll all continue your little plots -- turning my children against me or stealing some of my seed to put in soldiers whose loyalty belongs to you." To their credit, they didn't flinch. "But you seem to be missing something here. This is in your interest as well."
"*How*?" Erwin asked sharply. It wasn't a demand. Not really. He wanted to know.
"I believe I've already told you. What you are experiencing right now with Marley? That's the norm across the galaxy," I told them bluntly. "You are an island in a hostile world, and that doesn't change. Ever. Beyond this meager planet, there are empires full of beings just like me or infinitely stronger, and the moment they decide you have something that they want, you've lost it. You are entirely at their mercy, just like you are at mine."
Each word was a hammer to Nile, I saw. His fist stopped trembling in anger while the fire was being doused in his eyes.
"And the real kicker? I'm not particularly strong," I confessed, and the entire room recoiled at that. Even Levi and Kenny. "The difference in power between me and Emperor Vegeta is as big as that between you and me. For the Saiyan race, I was considered a Low-Class Warrior. Disposable trash a few steps above slave soldiers. And there are things in the galaxy that made Emperor Vegeta, a warrior who could destroy this entire planet with a wave of his hand, look as weak as you do compared to me."
And that's what reeked the most about Emperor Vegeta's little speech that served as an alarm clock. I was a Low-Class Saiyan by the Empire's standards. How was it that I, what they deemed to be trash, was amongst the last and greatest hopes for the Saiyan race's restoration?
Where was Prince Vegeta the Fourth, the Vegeta from Dragon Ball? Where were all of the High-Class Saiyans, who were far more suited to this mission by sheer raw power? When the Empire fell, were the dregs all that were left?
Or was there another plan at play that I hadn't been privy to?
"I see," Erwin replied, his tone terse. "I understand. This is a symptom of what you said before, is it not? That aggressive species are the ones that reach the stars."
I inclined my head to him. "To have peace, you must prepare for war," I quoted. "That's the cold hard truth of the universe. You succeed in

defending yourself from Marley? That's just the start. My race found your planet. It's only a matter of time before others do, if they haven't already."
"...Heh," Kenny chuckled. "Hehehe...! Ha! Hahaha! Hahahahaha!" He threw his head back and laughed, covering his face with his hat. "Truth of the universe, eh?" His laughter trailed off into chuckles, and the others looked at him cautiously. He wasn't in any rush to explain what he found so funny, but even as he stopped laughing, his lips were still curled into a grin.
"The affairs of the stars are not yet our concern," Dhalis decided. "The affairs of this world are. The Titans are a threat that we can no longer afford to tolerate. In exchange for liberating the island of them... we are prepared to name you king."
Exactly as I expected. "Oh? What about the sleepy guy?" I asked, offering a slight smile.
"He was no king, but an impostor," Dhalis answered curtly. "The true royal family used them as a cover for protection." They were finally admitting that, were they?
"Really? Then who was the real king?" I asked, pretending that I was surprised.
"Rod Reiss," came Dhalis's flat reply.
"The name sounds familiar," I admitted. "Do I know him?"
Levi glowered at me, "You killed him when we first met."
To that, I gave an owlish blink. "Seriously?"
"Seriously," Levi confirmed dryly and I couldn't keep the amusement off my face. This was one of the perks of metaknowledge. Averting catastrophes was all nice and good, but using it to fuck with people was the real best part.
"That's hilarious," I decided, entirely too amused for my own good, much to the chagrin of the others. I used it as a cover, even as I grinned openly with amusement. If they were coming to me with this, without any of the nobles or those religious nutjobs, then that told me the transition of power was over and done with. Without Rod Reiss or the Founding Titan, Kenny had no reason to throw his support in with them and without them...
"... It's a little funny," Levi admitted, sounding resigned to that fact.
"We also seek to legitimize your ascension as King with a marriage to what is now the true royal heir," Erwin continued, pretending the byplay hadn't happened. "Historia Reiss. Or, as you know her, Krista Lenz."
"... I killed her father then?" I remarked, scratching at my cheek. "That's less funny. You humans are pretty attached to your parents. You sure she's gonna want to marry me?"
"Historia has already been informed and accepted it," Erwin replied evenly. No hint on how that conversation actually went down or when it

happened. "Do you accept? Will you be our king?"
I leveled a lopsided grin at the lot of them, "Thought you'd never ask. Sure. Now I can show off the projects your spies have been snooping around about," I said, standing up. Then I blinked, "Wait, are they my spies now? Eh, we can share 'em," I decided, gesturing for them to follow. I heard Levi let out a quiet breath.
"Is it too late to take back the offer?" He wondered out loud, earning a cheeky grin from me.
"No take backs," I chided him, tossing open a balcony door. They got on the balcony while I floated up, creating a closed platform made out of ki. Hesitantly, they stood on it and found that it was sturdy. It was far from my usual standards, but it was enough for them to stand on at least.
Six months was a long time. It didn't seem like it was at times, but six months was half a year. This planet lacked anything that could properly challenge me. With prudent uses of metaknowledge, I snipped the greatest issues I would face in the bud. Zeke was dead, which eliminated another source of royal blood that could influence Ymir when the time came. Reiner and Pieck were both captured and held by the Walls. Bertholdt was similarly captured due to his association to Reiner.
Annie was still relatively in the clear. Neither Reiner, Bertholdt, nor Pieck had given her up since she was still at the castle. Erwin might suspect that there was another Titan Shifter in hiding, but he had no proof to act on.
The point was that I had nothing but time to train. Even the days of mindless hedonism were on hold because every woman in the castle was pregnant, with the exception of Mikasa and Annie.
Looking over now, I could see Hange talking to Nanaba and Rico -- All three of them beginning to truly show as they sipped tea in one of the gardens. They weren't huge or anything at just six months, but given how fit you had to be to use ODM gear it was noticeable. Hange offered an enthusiastic wave as we flew by. In three months, I was going to be a father.
A dozen times over.
There were things that I needed to finalize before then, and I had been a little worried at how close Erwin and the others were cutting it for my optimal timeline when it came to recognizing me as king. But now that I was, once I had the ceremony done and dusted... I could do what I'd planned on since the start. I had all the pieces I needed. I just needed to line the dominoes up so I could watch them fall.
"Then you always intended to aid us," Pixis noted, taking a sip from his flask as I sped over the Wall Rose, heading to my secret laboratory.
"Mikasa asked me to," I answered simply, letting that be the end of it. I

could sense their looks at my back as I spotted the busted up ruins of a church in no time at all. Let them make of that what they will. It didn't bother me any. It wasn't exactly a secret that I had a soft spot for Mikasa, even if they had no idea what to make of it. Including Mikasa herself.

I'm not exactly sure how I was doing when it came to winning her over, but I figured that once everyone started having kids, the baby fever would hit her.

Landing lightly on the ground, I released the others before tossing off the false cover for the cavern beneath our feet. The others were uncertain, but they followed along behind me as I descended down a set of stairs that I revealed, down to a heavy oak door. As I opened it, I spoke, "I've hardly kept it a secret that I've been using technology that's not of your world to get ahead."

There were sharp gasps as I opened the door, revealing the white crystalline terrain of the cavern some twenty feet beneath the surface. It almost looked like ice with a soft blue hue. Thick pillars of the crystal held up the ceiling, the floor was bumpy and uneven, while the walls were rough and jagged. It contrasted harshly with the carved stairs that I walked down.

As well as the machines that I had working in the space between the pillars.

"What… is this?" Nile breathed while Kenny let out a low hiss.

"Ya' found the ceremony chamber, huh? Shitty Rod never told me where it was," he noted, drinking in the sights. "How'd ya' find it?"

"The same way I know where all the major mineral and metal deposits on this world are. And where the soil is most fertile," I answered casually as I reached the bottom of the stairs. The cavern was anything but silent, with the sound of industrial might echoing through the vast cavern. "My people scanned the entirety of your planet, down to its core. Didn't know what this place was exactly, but I knew the crystals were something that I can work with."

Let them ferment on that. They were naming me king because they felt like they had to. They wanted to offer me something in exchange for protection -- being king, in their mind, bound me to them. However, that didn't mean they were united behind me for all the battles to come. In their eyes and mind, we weren't necessarily on the same side. Yet.

The knowledge that their planet had been scanned all the way down to the core without their notice planted a seed of self-doubt -- I had just arrived on their planet, and I already knew more about it than they did. It helped them realize just how small they were in comparison to just the world at large, much less the galaxy.

"How so?" Erwin questioned, and there was a curious glint in his eyes as he beheld the machines. The harvesters were tearing up chunks of

the crystal across the ground to be refined. The other machines ground those chunks up until they were the size of sand, and then they were heated up in a furnace until they were malleable.
In response, I approached a mannequin that I had prepared and cast off the cover, revealing the sum of six months of effort. It was a full suit of black body armor, not dissimilar to the armor that they would independently develop after the timeskip. Skin tight, black, with markings in anticipation of using the ODM gear and thicker armor plates around the vitals for extra safety. The biggest change was the helmet -- around the base of the head was a metal frame with the rest of the head covered by a crystal dome.
"It's a liquid crystal alloy," I informed. There were a lot of armor and weapon schematics that had been available to me, but this one was the best fit for what we would be facing and for what I had on hand. It just wasn't easy to go from late medieval technology to hyper-advanced tech that hadn't been discovered in the modern day of my last life.
I had to build the tool to make the tools, so I could create the tools I needed to create something like a jump drive for FTL travel.
Grabbing a gun I had prepared, I took a few steps away from the armor before I fired three times into the chest. The bullets slammed into it, flattening, but the mannequin didn't so much as wobble. "It's ideal for dealing with primitive projectile weapons like you still use. The liquid crystal acts as a kinetic sponge that converts that energy into heat, which is dispersed at these ports." With a gesture, I turned the armor behind, revealing the altered ODM gear.
There was a tank that would be placed on their upper back, with the gas exhaust on their lower back. In the space between them were three notches that served as the heat sinks.
"How good is this conversion? How much damage does the wearer still take?" Erwin asked while Kenny approached the armor, squinting at it and giving a close inspection.
"It's impervious to small arms fire," I answered confidently. I'm not sure where exactly the Saiyan race had picked up the design from, but it had been a place where they were shooting much more powerful guns than what Attack on Titan had to offer. "Not endlessly, mind you. The heatsinks can be overwhelmed if you're shot enough in a short period of time, but that shouldn't happen with the ODM gear. Get hit with something larger? It gets a little more dicey, but so long as you don't take another hit before the heat vents, you'll walk it off."
I was cut off from elaborating when a loud bang echoed through the cavern, and I saw that Kenny had shot me in the chest with the mounted weapon in the mannequin's hands. "...Did you really think I'd build something that would let you kill me?" I asked him, honestly

baffled.
"I figured you'd be the best thing to test this here handcannon on," Kenny replied, unbothered by the treason he just committed. "Big power, but the recoil ain't a thing. More of that crystal junk?"
Nodding at him, I waved off the others who were uncertain if they should take the shot as a legitimate attempt on my life. "That's right. Marley uses a thread-based body armor that catches bullets if they bother with armor at all. These are designed to pierce through that, along with light armored helmets. There are various attachments, allowing you to silence the shots or assemble them into a rifle if you need to shoot someone at range. Each bullet contains an explosive substance, so you don't use any gas shooting."
In short, the armor was perfectly designed to counter every advantage that Marley had in the field. Our troops would have greater mobility, armor, and weaponry. Hange's thunder spears were a good reference point for other weapons -- anti-tank rockets and the like. While I lacked the ability to create stuff like microchips for software-based guidance systems, I could make the rockets smaller and pack a harder punch.
Dhalis stepped forward, leveling a heavy gaze at me. "What about these 'airplanes?' The battleships? The war for Paradis will not just be won with soldiers."
"I have better versions already lined up," I admitted. The biggest roadblock was computer systems. At the current year, the ENIAC wasn't even a concept, which did let me start from scratch. Which led me to turning my attention to crystal based computers -- more complicated, yet easier to produce. It was also in producing the liquid crystal that tipped me over to them, as I already had the equipment set up to go that route.
So, what do you get when you combine ultrahard steel and the iceburst crystal propulsion system?
Imagine encountering a fighter jet in a WWI era biplane.
Dhalis held my gaze for a long moment, and I could only guess what was going through his mind as he looked at me. His gaze drifted to the working machinery around us, and a deep frown began to tug at his lips. "How long before we would be ready, your majesty?"
"Now that I have free rein over the island? Three and a half years."
Which puts us right on track with canon. Marley would be more desperate, considering that they lost every Titan that they had except for the Warhammer Titan. So, that could be an issue in the sense that I would have to crush their invasion force personally, and that wasn't what I wanted.
It couldn't just be me that conquered them. It needed to be the 'Devils of Paradis.'
In response to that, Dhalis slammed a fist over his heart. The action

seemed to surprise the others more than it did me, but sure enough, one by one, they all followed suit.
And I couldn't quite keep the grin off my face as all my plans were coming together beautifully.

...

"Alright. Let's try this again," I muttered, standing in a vast desert with the sweltering sun directly overhead. I wasn't on Paradis. I wouldn't risk doing this on what amounted to my island, even if the damn thing was the size of Australia. Too much risk of someone getting a look, and collateral damage. Channeling my ki to my hands, a silver white light began to emit from my hands before I threw it up high in the sky.
The Power Ball. An artificial moon created by Bardock, Goku's father. I got the technique from the ship, and it had even credited him as part of the reason why the Saiyan Empire was able to so rapidly expand. The ki ball emitted Blutz waves, which triggered the Oozaru transformation. Turning A Saiyan into a hundred-foot-tall great ape.
Since I had nothing worthwhile to fight, I found that I was training a great deal. The industrial base I was building from the ground up wasn't at the level that I could create something like a gravity chamber, though, so I had to find other ways to train.
Such as learning the techniques from the data bank on the ship, and recreating some from Dragon Ball or other forms of media. Like Bleach or One Piece. However, as I attempted to create new techniques I found that I was neglecting my fundamentals.
Such as controlling the Oozaru transformation. Which, admittedly, was entirely motivated by the fact that I missed the opportunity to show Zeke who was the bigger monkey when he transformed. I hadn't stopped kicking myself since.
"Hnn...!" I grit my teeth, looking up at the Power Ball and feeling the transformation take hold. A well of power began to rise up from deep in my gut that it was too much for my body to contain, so my body grew with it. The issue with the transformation wasn't the pain or the power however, but what came with it.
Rage.
It filled me up like a cup, tainting every thought as my vision went red. There was an insatiable urge to kill, to *destroy*, to ***annihilate*** everything around me until nothing was left.
"Ahhgh...!" I groaned, fur covering my bare body as I grew a foot in height. Then another. Then five. Then ten. I could feel my face changing, my teeth sharpening as my mouth became a snout. The physical transformation was painful, but not debilitatingly so. Going in I had thought that would be the worst part of the transformation.
I had been completely and utterly unprepared for the rage that came with the Oozaru transformation. The first time I transformed, I

immediately blacked out, and when I came to I was in a wasteland and found out that it was sixteen hours later, even though the Power Ball had only lasted for thirty minutes. There had been nothing to fight, and nothing to kill, so my Oozaru self just devastated the landscape with my fists, kicks, and breath attacks.
Even now, when I knew to brace myself for it, I could feel the rage taking hold of me, slipping through the cracks of my self-control and spreading like an infection. The worst part was that I was aware of it. It was like this thing in my head that was making me angry, rather than me actually feeling angry.
"Haaaa***aaa***…!" I groaned, struggling against the urge to destroy as the transformation completed. In the past three months since I officially became King of Paradis, I had attempted to control the Oozaru transformation a hundred and thirty-eight times. Eighty of those times, I immediately blacked out. Twenty-three times, I managed to get halfway through the transformation before blacking out. Fifteen times I managed to reach this point, where I completed the transformation. Then immediately blacked out.
The past twenty times, I completed the transformation and retained control for a time but lost it when I got distracted. Or when some sand flew in my eye. Or when I realized that I couldn't fly as an Oozaru and got pissed off. Little irritants became sparks that blew apart my self control.
"**What a pain**," I said, my voice loud and thunderous to my ears. I sat down on the ground, sending up a great plume of sand that I tried to ignore, even if the idea of getting sand in my fur had me wanting to *howl* like a madman. "**No wonder this shitty ability was abandoned**. **Why can't I learn the Kaioken instead**?"
I knew the reason, and while I managed to not rant and rave, there was just this… urge to be frustrated. My experience transforming into the Oozaru was an interesting one. Dragon Ball talked about the stamina drain that came with the Super Saiyan transformation, or the strain of the Kaioken.
That wasn't present with the Oozaru transformation. My ki felt heavier. Dense. Even without the complication of the bubbling pod of rage in my chest, I don't think I could use it without significant difficulty. But, if I did master it, then I think it could be possible for me to stay in the transformation forever. And that had interesting potential as my Oozaru body was far more durable and sturdy, meaning that I could use more taxing techniques.
Like the Kaioken.
But, that was putting the cart before the horse. I needed to master the Oozaru transformation before I tried that. And I just *barely* managed to crush the surge of anger in my chest at the thought I would have to

wait.
"**Breathe in**," I muttered, closing my eyes and inhaling, "... **And breathe out**." I never thought I'd be one to meditate, but I found that it was helping me deal with the anger and destructive urges. Barely. But some progress was better than no progress.
Plus, mastering the Oozaru transformation opened up the path to Super Saiyan 4 once I became a Super Saiyan. Likewise, Saiyan God form could be unlocked with my kids giving me their ki in a ritual. Though, admittedly, I'm not sure if I would call myself 'pure of heart.' Those goals were a bit far off in the distance, so much like with my empire, I needed to forge solid foundations to build towards those goals on.
That thought helped me center myself as I breathed deeply again, my nose twitching at the sand trying to enter my nose. Saiyans did better when we had a concrete goal to strive towards. Frieza. Cell. Majin Buu. Jerin. Goku Black. Moro. Time and time again, the largest and most explosive growths of strength the Z Fighters had came when they had a powerful enemy to defeat. They grew more in days preparing to take down the villain of the year than they did from years of training between threats.
Because that's what drove the Saiyans forward. The desire to overcome and stand at the top.
I meditated for hours, slowly feeling the sun drift down towards the horizon and the heat start to cool. It was only when the sun reached the horizon that I felt satisfied with my progress, enough to undo the transformation. Over the course of about ten seconds, I shrunk back down to my normal height. After doing some stretches, I put on my clothes before I jumped straight into the air and took off back home.
In the nine months I had been on this planet, I had mastered flight. There had been some training games available on my scouter to help me improve my speed and sharp turns, but I beat them all in a few weeks. Nearly a year before, a journey between 'Mid-East Alliance' territory to Paradis would have taken the better part of a few hours, and now it took *minutes*. Maybe as little as one if I didn't mind going full throttle.
So in no time at all, I left the stretch of desert that I turned into my training ground and flew over the vast ocean towards what had become home. The Titans had been exterminated on the island, allowing us to develop it and harness its rich resources freely. Marley hadn't sent a scout ship yet, but I was expecting one soon -- in canon, Pieck and Zeke had been on the island for about three months waiting for Eren to come seal Wall Maria. But, I imagine that they had at least been in contact, as they had handed Ymir over to be eaten.
So, I'm betting Marley was getting antsy with a ship and all of their

Titan Shifters missing.
The Royal Palace was located behind Wall Sina. And, while I had been fond of my castle, I couldn't deny that the palace was swankier. Large gardens surrounded the main palace with several wings that branched off. My destination was a balcony door that had been left open, and it was there that I found a clone of myself sitting behind a desk marking some papers.
"Make any progress?" He asked me, setting down a pen.
"Why bother asking?" I asked him, holding out a hand for him to take. As he did so, I felt the divided ki that I had split off from myself flow back into me. And, with it…
Memories.
The Multi-Form technique was a dangerous one, and one whose potential had been left entirely unexplored in Dragon Ball. Over the course of nine months, I had cut down on the ki needed to create a clone to a fourth of my overall ki. And I had succeeded in my secondary goal with the technique -- I turned it into something like the Shadow Clone jutsu. By reabsorbing my clones, I could gain their memories.
I'd even argue that the Multiform technique was better than Shadow Clones, honestly. My clones weren't something that would vanish in a puff of smoke with a single hit.
"... Huh," I muttered, the memories swiftly settling in my mind. Paperwork to approve land grants and loans was tedious, but made all the more bearable with Sasha treating herself to a snack before bed and drinking three loads before she was satisfied. Her gluttony truly knew no limits. However, there was also something far more interesting happening at the moment that my scouter had detected. Annie was making her move.
"I guess learning that Bertholdt and Reiner were scheduled to be eaten lit a fire under her," I remarked to myself, looking off in the distance as I spread out my awareness.
Ki sensing was another trick I had picked up over the months. I was no Goku, who could sense people across the galaxy, but I found that the entirety of the planet was within my range if I focused on it. Though, sorting out and memorizing ki signatures was a task if I did so. Because of that, I could sense Annie approaching Wall Sina with her ODM gear based on how fast she was moving, heading to Pieck's prison.
I could also sense the Beast Titan that had been reborn on the island. We never got to see it in canon, but sure enough, just as it said -- a random baby was born with the Beast Titan. And, that baby, if nothing was done, would live up to thirteen years old because of Ymir's curse.
"I've got plenty of time," I reassured myself, deciding to step out onto

the balcony with my scouter pressed to my ear. Leaving the palace behind, I flew up and over Wall Sina just in time to see Annie use her ODM gear to fly over it. The Walls weren't exactly guarded, so she had an easy time of it.
She was completely ignorant of my presence high above her. I crossed my arms as I watched her steal two horses and take off in the general direction of Pieck's prison. "Who told you where she was? Loose lips sink ships, you know?" I remarked to myself as I frowned.
Pieck, Bertholdt, and Reiner were all in separate prisons along with portions of the crew that we had captured. That way none of them could shift without killing hundreds of Marleyans with the ensuing cave in. Efforts to befriend the Marleyans were underway much like in canon, but the progress was almost nonexistent. There were perhaps a handful, less than a dozen, of the thousand we had captured that showed anything less than utter contempt for Eldians.
And, as far as the Paradisians were aware… we did not have any Titan Shifters on our side. They knew of the existence of the Female Titan, but the others had refused to name her. Ymir was still hidden in plain sight. So, Erwin and the others suspected that there were at least two Shifters on the island, but not who and where. One of them was an enemy, the other was a potential ally. But, what was that compared to the possibility of having the Armored Titan, the Colossal Titan, and the Cart Titan in the hands of loyalists?
We had the Titan serum, taken from the royal family's reserves. So, it was as simple as injecting some soldiers with the serum, letting them eat three confirmed enemies, and the power that had nearly killed them all would be in our hands.
I'm sure it also helped that it convinced some of the powers within my little kingdom that they wouldn't be so completely reliant on my strength. Titans were nothing to me, even less so now considering all of my training, but they were still monsters for the Eldians on Paradis.
So, I watched Annie make her move in the dead of night. She stayed clear of the main roads, heading towards the prison that was located in an old mine that tapped out at some point during the last century before my arrival. Annie moved with such confidence, I didn't have a doubt that she knew exactly where Pieck was being held. It took her hours to arrive all the same, where the entrance to the mine was being guarded by members of the Garrison.
Their attention was lax -- being a guard was an easy job to do, but a difficult job to do well. It took a special kind of willpower to stare off into darkness night after night, nothing ever happening, and always remain alert. While slacking off was understandable, it wasn't okay as Annie managed to slip right by them -- not through the front entrance itself, but by one of the ventilation points that she crawled through.

I flew above the mine, sensing her move through the mine shafts. She didn't seem to know where Pieck was, but she cleverly deduced that she would be near the bottom. It took her near thirty minutes before she found Pieck, seemingly ignoring the other captives. I was curious as to what they would do, and to my mild surprise, Annie and Pieck began to sneak out of the mine, leaving the others behind. Did they plan to double back for them?

I was curious -- both at how far they could get in their escape attempt and who exactly was working with them. The two of them emerged from the same ventilation shaft. Pieck looked a bit worse for wear, but spending about eight months in a cell would do that. They mounted the horses and galloped off, and I lowered my altitude to overhear them speaking to each other.

"If Bertholdt is on the other side of Wall Rose, it'll take too long to reach him, much less Reiner," Pieck noted to Annie. "It would be faster to cut across Wall Sina."

"You don't get it, Pieck. He knows too much," Annie stressed. "He knew your ship was going to arrive before it did. He always knows when someone is about to enter a room. It might have something to do with that earpiece of his, but I don't know." Well, well, well -- they were puzzling out what the scouter did. "If we go over Wall Sina, he might notice us. We should just go. Head straight for Wall Maria and the sea."

"And abandon your comrades?" Pieck questioned, her tone light but sharp.

"Yes," Annie answered without an ounce of hesitation. "The past six years… I just want to go *home*, Pieck." Annie sounded utterly rung out. Exhausted, both physically and mentally. "I want to see my dad again before Galick conquers the whole planet, or whatever he's planning."

Pieck seemed to consider that for a moment as they rode through the night, sending Annie an almost pitying glance. "No matter what, we need to free Bertholdt. He's the only way we'll be able to swim to Marley."

"The Cart could do it," Annie insisted, but Pieck shook her head.

"That's not what I meant, and you know it," Pieck rebuked and Annie wilted ever so slightly. "Marley has lost Zeke, and with him, the Beast Titan and his ability to turn people into Titans with his scream. The Cart and Female Titans won't be enough. We need to take back the Colossal and Armored Titans. It's safer this way, Annie." Pieck insisted, but Annie scoffed.

"You wouldn't believe that if you understood what you're dealing with. If Paradis is hell, then that man is the Devil. He's too powerful and smart by half, Pieck. Slaughtering the Titans and War Chief Zeke was easy for him. It didn't even qualify as an inconvenience. And he has the people here wrapped around his finger. *No*, Pieck." Annie stressed, "going back

over Sina isn't the safer choice. Doggy paddling across the ocean and hoping Marley is feeling merciful is by far safer."
Pieck took a moment to digest that, her long black hair whipping in the wind. She came to a decision. "Then we have to transform. It's the only way we'll be able to reach Bertholdt in time. We can grab Reiner as we flee."
I was being underestimated. It wasn't her fault. Her mistake was lacking imagination. She simply couldn't imagine just how much stronger I was than humanity.
I think a little display was in order.
Flying back up, I began to fly back over to Wall Sina, hearing a distant clap of thunder behind me that anyone who heard it could be forgiven for thinking came from the storm brewing overhead. In a quick minute, I crossed the territory of Wall Sina, heading to Bertholdt's prison. Being king had some perks as the guards let me pass without any issue, letting me grab Bertholdt. Cutting off a limb so he couldn't transform only took a swipe of my hand, and gagging him prevented him from giving the game away. Leaving that prison, I headed to the one that Pieck had just escaped and tossed him inside of her cell.
By that time, I was only waiting around twenty minutes in what had been Bertholdt's prison, posting up near his cell for maximum effect. I sensed the two arriving at the prison, then stealthily slipping by the guards and finding a path that led to where Bertholdt had been held. The door opened next to me and Pieck slinked forward, almost soundlessly as she peered into the darkness of Bertholdt's cell.
"Bertholdt? It's Pieck and Annie. We're here to rescue you-"
Once they stopped into the room, I closed the door behind them, making them both jump and level rifles at the door. Then I formed a bead of ki at the tip of my finger, washing the dark room with a soft blue light, illuminating myself.
Despair consumed Annie, and it shone in her eyes like a beacon. The rifle fell from her hands, clattering to the floor noisily, and she followed a half second later. She fell to her knees, instantly giving up, while Pieck held my gaze with an unchanging expression. I could almost see the cogs turning in her mind, trying to think a way out of this. A sigh escaped her as she made a show of dropping her gun and raising her hands. "We never had a chance, did we?"
"You didn't. It was a nice attempt, though," I commended, flicking the bead of ki up to the ceiling so I could cross my arms once more. "Annie's idea of rushing to the ocean wouldn't have worked either, sorry to say." Annie flinched, her gaze lowering to the floor -- let them guess how much I knew and how much I could hear.
"I suppose this becomes my cell, then? I'm sorry, Annie," Pieck said, clenching her jaw as she held my gaze.

"I didn't say that," I noted, making Pieck's eyes narrow. She was only introduced in the final season of Attack on Titan, but she had quickly become a fan favorite. Loyal, smart, and she got the job done despite the odds. It also helped that she was an absolute bombshell. "It's natural to resist when your life is in danger. You would have disappointed the hell out of me if you just laid down and died. Actually, you managed to impress me, both of you -- you tried to save your comrades despite the long odds. I like it."
Pieck watched me, her eyes unblinking. "Are you impressed enough to let us go?"
"Sure," I answered casually and Pieck flinched so badly you'd think I slapped her.
There was a dawning incomprehension on her face, like I was a puzzle that the pieces just didn't fit. Annie, however, understood. "It's that hopeless for us, is that it? We never even had a chance at beating you."
I offered a knowing smile, "You didn't. The very moment I arrived on this planet, it became mine. I'm just giving the rest of you a few years to come to grips with that fact."
"Because you're a nice guy?" Annie snarked, some of the life returning to her voice when she realized that this wasn't the dead end she thought it was. And that life came in the form of dry sarcasm.
"Kinda," I replied, my smile taking a pitying edge. "I could wipe Marley off the map in around… twelve hours, give or take. Most of that being travel time, of course." There it was. I could see that it was really starting to sink in with Pieck now. "But salvation isn't something that can be given to you. It's something that you have to take with your own hands. What I'm giving the Eldians is the opportunity to seize it."
I pushed myself off the wall and both girls stiffened. "I'm willing to let you both go. Bertholdt and Reiner will stay -- I'd get yelled at if I let them go. They're the face of the ones who toppled the Walls."
Annie looked up sharply, "I… That sin is mine as well. I… I'm the Female Titan," she declared, rising to her feet-
"Yeah, I know," I answered, making her wobble so badly that Pieck had to stop her from falling.
Annie searched my face for signs of deceit, but she found none. A soft breathless chuckle escaped her. "You knew?"
"I thought it was interesting. I wanted to see what would happen if a Saiyan and Titan Shifter had a kid, but I had that covered with Ymir," I continued, following up that gut punch with an uppercut. "You didn't seem that interested in being in the Relief Regiment in the first place. I figured you had a sweetheart back in Marley or something, and you only joined because of the mission Marley gave you."
Annie stared at me hopelessly, closing her eyes as she found her feet, even if she still leaned on Pieck. "... I just didn't want to be a whore for

Marley," Annie admitted in a soft voice. Pieck looked at her sharply, but I didn't see any condemnation in her eyes.
"Fair enough," I admitted with a small shrug. "But, back to my point -- have you really thought this through? Marley has been unforgivably weakened. Even with the assumption that you two return, of the six Titans that they possessed, they would only have the Cart, the Female, and the Warhammer. And for some moronic reason, the Warhammer doesn't participate in any of Marley's wars."
I tilted my head at them, "Marley has done everything that they accuse the Eldians of, and history is shaping up to repeat itself. Only Marley doesn't have an island it can fuck off too. The boot on the neck of all the kingdoms and territories that have been suppressed for so long has slipped. On every border, they are going to face war."
Their expressions tightened, telling me they already suspected that much. "And that benefits you," Pieck half accused, but the remark was more probing, I think.
"It does," I admitted. "Without Titans, and so thoroughly weakened by their overreliance on them, Marley will be forced down a road of rapid development, and that's not a road they were prepared to take. The rest of the world has been in an arms race to better kill Titans while Marley has stagnated. They'll realize this, but it'll be far too late. It's already too late as it is. But, in a desperate attempt to buy time, they will mobilize the Eldian slave legions and throw bodies at the enemy to slow them down long enough for the heads of state to try and pull their heads out of their asses."
Pieck's glare flattened, but she didn't argue. I don't think I was saying anything she hadn't already thought of.
It would be a mass mobilization of the Eldian population across Marley. Of the billion people that were on the continent of Marley, five hundred million of them were Eldians. Of the two billion people on the planet, seven hundred million were Eldians. Marley had the largest population of them, and they would put guns in their hands, no training, and just send them at the enemy to slow them down, even if a wall had to be built from their corpses.
However, they *would* arm the Eldians… and even a beaten dog will bite back if kicked hard enough.
Marley would single handedly create the circumstances I would need to conquer the rest of this planet.
"That, and naturally, Marley will tighten the belt on its territories and subjects. In their desperate bid to prevent a rebellion, they will foster one. This dissent is useful for me. As when my people are ready to leave the island, we'll find allies across the world who hate Marley more than the Eldians." I met her flat glare head on, unflinching as I continued. "And, naturally, those who extend a hand to us in friendship

will find steadfast allies to overthrow the tyranny of Marley. Of course, I'll be replacing it with my own tyranny, but my flavor of tyranny doesn't have children being fed to dogs for a laugh or forcing them to become mass murderers."
There was a tremor in Pieck's hand. She tried to hide it by curling her hands into fists. "Why are you telling us this?"
"You already know the answer, Pieck," I told her and that got a defeated smile out of her.
"Because nothing will change even if I say anything to them. At worst, they dismiss me for being an Eldian. At best… it won't matter. Because you're too strong."
I nodded, letting a silence fill the cell.
Pieck closed her eyes for a moment, considering everything I just said, and when she opened them, her gaze was sharp. "We can return to Marley… or?" She prompted, controlling her voice tightly. No fear or defeat.
"Or you can stay," I finished for her. "I'll need to know who leaked the locations of the other Shifters, but other than that… If you have anyone in the internment zone, it'd take me all of an hour to grab them and bring them here." At that, Annie stiffened, the realization dawning on her.
Pieck tilted her head, "I would be eaten."
"I think you're forgetting who you're talking to here," I pointed out and Pieck narrowed her eyes ever so slightly. "Reiner and Bertholdt? They're being eaten. That's already decided. I'm the only one who knows that Annie is the Female Titan, and as long as I keep my mouth shut that won't change. You, Pieck, are only guilty of working with Marley. You didn't help topple the Walls. Switch over to our side, and that's that."
Annie let out a small shuddering breath, "My dad. My dad is in the Liberio internment camp. If you can bring him here… I don't have any reason to be loyal to Marley."
Both of us turned our attention to Pieck, who seemed to ponder her options for a moment before she seemed to come to a decision.
"You're inhuman," she accused me, but there was a lack of anger in her voice. It was an observation.
"Inhuman? Maybe. Not insayian, though," I corrected.
"It won't be enough to convince most that I switched sides out of the blue," Pieck continued dispassionately. "They'll need to see proof. First, they'll want me to give up Annie's name."
"Just tell them that you told me, and I know who it is," I supplied and she considered that before nodding.
"Secondly, if I am to be trusted, then they need to see that I have reason to stay on this side once I've switched," Pieck stated, taking in a big sigh before letting it out. "Annie told me about the *duties* of the

Relief Regiment. Put a baby in me."
Annie's jaw dropped as she stared at Pieck, who delivered the line flat as could be. Meanwhile, I pondered that and I saw her angle-- she wanted to remain close to Annie, and she wanted to keep a finger on the pulse of things in my kingdom. And I imagine she thought that in doing so she would put herself in a position to bail out of a sinking ship if my plan went awry.
Likewise, a child was a form of protection. She thought while I might not care much about her, I would care for the life of my child, so she would be protected from both me and from external threats.
That was ice cold and I liked it.
"Sure," I agreed easily. Pieck wasn't exactly trustworthy, but I understood her levers. She didn't like or trust Marley, but she was loyal to her friends. She was extremely intelligent and observant, and those were qualities that I found could be very useful when used to support me and my ambitions. "I'll take you back to the palace to let you get cleaned up beforehand, though. Now, onto your end -- who leaked the info?"
Annie took in a slow breath and offered a small nod, "His name is Eric Creeman." That name meant absolutely nothing to me. Then, I realized, it actually did after a moment of searching my memories. A portly man with a sweeper mustache and a hairline that he really needed to let go of. "When we were looking for the true royal family, we made connections with various nobles or members of the Military Police. I came to him and he gave me the information."
I raised an eyebrow, "For free?"
Annie offered me a wary grimace, "I got the impression he didn't like you very much. And I'm pretty sure that he was planning on betraying me. I think he wanted the Colossal and Armored Titans on his side if it ever came to a conflict with you."
Ahhh. I see. On the tin, that was a pretty stupid plan. And it *was* a stupid plan. But it was understandable -- to these people, the Colossal and Armored Titan were the ones that brought their little world to its knees. They were beings of extreme power. I was a being of extreme power. So, they were putting me in the same class as them.
It also revealed another factor at play.
The coup in canon had already been relatively bloodless. Some people died, but it was mostly a smooth transition in power. That remained true this time, but my presence had thrown a wrench into things. Killing Rod Reiss seemed to have caused some unforeseen complications as while it had allowed the military to slot themselves into positions of power, there hadn't been the mass arrests of the nobles and top commanders of the Military Police.
Things just got shuffled around a bit, and it would seem that after nine-

ish months, the nobles were trying to make a bid for power.
"Hm. That's no problem," I said, offering a thin smile. I always did like the idea of an absolute monarchy. I could use this as a pretence to roll up the nobility and fold their territories into my direct control with minimal fuss.
As I said the words, however, I sensed something in the Capital. Historia.
My attention snapped in the direction of her, back at the palace. Pieck and Annie both tensed. "Is something wrong?" Pieck added sharply, as if she was already a loyal follower.
"The opposite. Historia is in labor."
I was about to become a father.

...

"*Ahhh!* ***How*** could something that feels good end so painfully?! I'm scared!" Sasha shouted at the top of her lungs, clutching her head in her hands as she made a face of extreme agony. Because of it, my arrival went pretty much entirely unnoticed. The lounge was filled with everyone.
"I can't believe Queen Historia went into labor first," Hange noted, seated on a couch, her hands on her own swollen stomach. "We had a head start, Beane, but it looks like she beat us to the finish line."
"We're not naming our kid that," I said, announcing my arrival from an open balcony that I stepped through, Annie and Pieck landing behind me. That made all the others perk up, and I saw all the women in my life, minus Historia. All of them were heavily pregnant to the point that it was a wonder more of them weren't already in labor. The number of them had increased over the months, and I'm sure a couple of them were planted spies, much like Pieck intended to be. So, she'd have good company.
Hange leaned her head back from the couch she sat on, "But it's a vegetable? Galick? Garlic? All your people's names are derived from vegetables, and beans are vegetables." I hadn't been surprised that Hange had picked up on that. Her hyperfixation extended beyond Titans. She was delighted by everything that she found interesting.
"I mean more because you're trying to name our kid after a cannibal," I replied, bringing Annie and Pieck in.
"Tsk." Nailed it right on the head, huh?
"You! Moron!" Ymir shouted at me as she paced the room, "What are you doing in here, huh?! Historia needs emotional support right now because she's squeezing your kid out of her!" She said, looking like she was just shy of throwing a nearby vase at me. Then she actually picked it up and hurled it. Ymir was temperamental under normal circumstances -- with pregnancy hormones and Historia being in labor? A volatile combination.

I caught the vase with a palm and set it on the end table near the couch that Hange lounged on. "Do you really think I'd let Historia be in any danger during childbirth?" I asked, raising an eyebrow at her. "She's fine. My people's technology will have her as good as new by the time the labor is over."
The healing fluid that had saved Goku's life during the Namek Saga was of Saiyan origin. Or, rather, it was of Truffle origin, and the Saiyans had looted it. The Truffles had discovered how to create the fluid as cavemen, and they'd only improved the formula as they advanced. I had the recipes and the schematics for the healing pods, and they were one of the very first things I made sure to produce.
I wasn't going to lose one of my women or my kids because this planet hadn't figured out how to beat childbirth.
Ymir tsked, still pissed off and looking for something else to throw. I gave her a distraction, "Anyway -- this is Pieck. She's the Cart Titan, and she's part of the Relief Regiment now," I informed, making Pieck sputter at my delivery. The others reacted with various amounts of surprise, but Hange was the face of it.
"Yes!" Hange exclaimed, struggling to stand up until Mikasa offered a hand to pull her up. "A Titan Shifter? That means little Titan babies?!" She gushed, utterly delighted by the mere thought of it.
Mikasa was giving me a sharp look, and I shook my head. "Don't trust her completely, but she won't try anything," I reassured her in a low voice. I fully believed that much. I wouldn't have brought her here otherwise. Mikasa gave me a small nod, and I patted her on the shoulder as I headed towards the door. "The labor is done, by the way. Who wants to meet the newest member of the family?"
There were spit-takes all around me, with Ymir shoving me out of the way so she could waddle down the hall to the medical wing. I just shook my head at her and continued walking, the others following at more subdued paces. There was an air of vapid curiosity and excitement as we walked, reaching the room to find that Ymir had left it open.
Laying on a bed with white sheets, her hair still damp from the healing pod that was on the other side of the room, was Historia. She was looking down at a little bundle wrapped in cloth with a sense of awe, with Ymir cooing over her shoulder like the kid was her own. Historia barely noticed us enter until she heard the clamoring kick up when the girls saw it was, in fact, a baby in Historia's arms.
Mikasa's expression in particular was a treat. She looked equal parts in awe and mesmerized.
"Galick!" She exclaimed, giving me a wide earnest smile. "Meet your daughter," Historia said, presenting the bundle to me and for the first time, I looked down at my child.

Her hair was black, and unless she was going to have permanent bedhead, then I guess she didn't get that gene. The only trace of it was a thick lock that fell towards one eye. Her eyes began to crack open at getting passed around, and she looked up at me with Historia's bright blue eyes.

I found myself smiling down at my daughter, and for the first time since I arrived in this life, it was for pure reasons. "A daughter, huh? That means you get to name her," I noted to Historia, not looking away as I offered a finger and chuckled when her plump face twisted into a scowl. While she might have missed the hair gene, she had a Saiyan's instincts because her arm struggled free of her swaddling to do battle with the offending finger.

"Elery," Historia decided. "Princess Elery."

"Welcome to the world, Princess Elery," I said to my daughter. And it was that moment that it started to become real to me, I think. That everything that I told Erwin and the others applied to me just as much as it did to them. Whatever had snuffed out the Saiyan race was still out there, and there was no guarantee that they hadn't followed me here.

I was a big fish in a tiny pond, and there was a whole damn ocean out there across the stars.

It hadn't felt real. Not really. Honestly, there were moments that had me wondering if any of this was actually real and not some extended dream or delusion. I hadn't always taken it seriously as a result. Taking over the planet was treated almost like a game, and the first thing I did upon arrival was embrace the most generic and teenage desire for a harem to expirence mindless hedonism.

It really hadn't settled upon me the stakes until I was holding my newborn daughter in my hands, and the first of many children to come. Something clenched in my chest and, in that moment, I made a promise that when the time came…

I would be prepared.

Chapter 5

"They're calling it the Great War," Willy Tybur said, setting down his newspaper while a servant placed a cup of tea before him. Emblazoned on the front page was the news in bold headlines: **Marley on the defensive! Fighting on all fronts!** "The war to end all wars."

Head of the Tybur family, who are credited with defeating the Eldian Empire. A well-connected and respected diplomat.

"A rather naive hope, but an understandable one," Theo Magath replied, seated across from him. The man was a military commander, one overseeing the Mid-East front. "I'm sure they said the same after the Titan War a century ago. But war is a part of human nature, and the only time that will change is when there is nothing left to fight over… or no humans left to fight."

The single competent military officer in Marley's army.

Willy offered a thin smile at that -- it wasn't a joke. Theo was a rather dour man to begin with, by all accounts. However, over the past three years, he had more reasons to be dour than he knew what to do with. Picking up his tea, Willy looked at his reflection and found that he barely recognized himself -- when did he become a fully grown man who held the fate of hundreds of millions in his hands?

"Perhaps," Willy admitted, looking away from the reflection of a man he no longer recognized. Instead, he cast his gaze over the balcony at the city of Liberio. The very last city liberated from the Eldians in a sham of a war caused by one man's cowardice and bravery. "But we can deny our nature if given sufficient cause."

"You would know better than I, Lord Tybur," Theo replied. "Diplomacy is your battlefield. Not mine."

That did get a chuckle out of Willy, looking back at the dower man. His eyes were hard and sharp, looking at him like he was taking his measure even as he decided which angle to cut his throat at. It made him perfect for Willy's plans. The man was respected; he had a position of prestige in training the Warrior Candidates, and he was a vocal proponent of 'modernizing' the military. Some saw him overseeing the mission that saw them lose six of the seven Titans Marley possessed as a mark against him…

But those who did often forgot that it was a mission given to him.

"Indeed, but that is precisely why I asked for you to meet me," Willy admitted. "Tell me, what is your opinion of our position?"

"We're losing," Theo answered readily, as if he had just been waiting for someone to ask him that question. It actually caught Willy off guard a bit, how readily he answered. He'd expected that he would have to offer assurances or coax the truth out of him due to fear of being seen as unpatriotic. "The papers have it right for the first time. We're losing on every single front, but the Mid-East Alliance is driving a dagger in our stomach, and if they're not stopped, they won't stop until they hit our heart."

An accurate summary of the situation, Willy reflected. For the first time in history, the Marleyan Empire was ceding territory. The military bases and ports they had on the smaller islands around Hizuru, which allowed them to project a military presence over the island to leverage favorable trade deals that weren't borderline extortionate -- they were outright extortion.

At the onset of war with the Mid-East Alliance, Hizuru, in an uncharacteristically bold move, launched a series of surprise attacks on those islands and cut off all diplomatic ties with Marley. It was a painful and expensive loss but hardly a mortal blow, as the colonies in the western hemisphere could cover the loss. This, however, emboldened Acirema -- their colonies in the New World -- to a startling degree. They agreed to provide aid in exchange for what amounted to independence. Not entirely, not yet, but Willy expected that they would be within his lifetime.

Aidni, unwilling to go to war with Marley, did exactly as Theo said. They used the Mid-East as a testing bed to develop anti-Titan weapons, offering funding and volunteering their population of Eldians to fight on behalf of the Mid-East Alliance.

"This war, in the past three years, has claimed twenty million lives. Of those twenty million, twelve are ours," Willy noted, setting down his tea.

"Ten of which are Eldians," Theo answered, and there wasn't a shred of mercy in his voice. Theo didn't hate the Eldians as some did. He wasn't the type to spit on them when he saw an armband. However, he did view them as lesser. Their lives were simply worth less to him than the life of a Marleyan. It was why he could send brigades of Eldians against fortified positions as a distraction or callously abandon them in a position to retreat.

"And of the eight million losses for the Mid-East Alliance, six are also Eldians," Willy continued. The knowledge sat in his stomach like a stone. Sixteen million Eldians dead over three years. Nearly twice that number were wounded, most of whom were maimed. All because they possessed the same lineage that ran through his own veins, but unlike them he had been lucky enough to be born into the right family.

The number shouldn't have been a fraction of what it was. However, the generals and commanders were all too willing to spend Eldian lives

for progress.
"That number will increase," Theo stated without hesitation. "Expanded conscription in the Internment Zones has been approved. Children as young as eight will serve as soldiers in a limited capacity. In theory," he amended because, just like him, Willy didn't believe for a second that the stated duties of ferrying ammunition and doing simple maintenance would be adhered to. "But you didn't need me to tell you that. Or that we're losing this war."
"... I did not," Willy admitted. "Throughout my life, I have cultivated countless diplomatic ties across the world. Relationships that I have fostered since I was a child, all in anticipation of this war. The day when human ingenuity eclipsed the might of the Titans. It had been my hope that when the time came, I could use those relationships to curtail the war. To make the peace easier to swallow."
He swirled his tea before taking a sip and met the gaze of Theo. "Now that the time has come, I find myself… opposed." There wasn't any other way he could describe it. "Friends I've hadsince childhood have been assassinated. Diplomats I've enjoyed long standing relationships with have been removed from office. There has been a sharp rise in anti-Marleyan sentiment across the globe. What's more, people are acting against what should be their own self-interest, even on the assumption that Marley loses this war and the peace on the table is accepted."
The peace terms that the Mid-East Alliance was demanding were ruinous. The complete relinquishing of their territories in Southern Marley, reparations that would take centuries to pay off, and the surrendering of three of the Nine once they were found or reclaimed. That, in addition to a demilitarized zone one hundred and fifty miles long on what would be the new border and the surrendering of a dozen military ports across the world.
It would bring Marley to its knees, and they would never stand again if the rest of the world had anything to say about it.
"Opposed by who?" Theo questioned, his tone sharp before he found his answer. His lips pressed into a frown, and he answered his own question. "The Devils of Paradis?"
"We lost six of the Nine on the island, and in the past three years, not a single ship has returned from scouting expeditions there," Willy noted. Paradis had finally become active again after a century of slumbering. A change that chilled Willy's blood, as he was one of the few who knew the truth. And because of it, he feared.
He feared that in their attempts to reclaim the Founding Titan, Marley had awoken something terrible.
"Tell me," Willy continued, "what do you know of King Fritz?" He asked, taking a long sip of his tea. Theo sensed something about the

conversation, but he had no idea what. He couldn't. The truth was so unthinkable that he would have never considered the possibility.
"Only what everyone else knows, I suspect," Theo replied, sensing that he would be learning that there was more to the story. And that's why Willy chose him. He was… malleable. Open to ideas and other interpretations to what he saw as the Truth.
"King Fritz lied to the world," Willy began. "The threat of the Rumbling was always an empty one, since the very beginning. King Fritz was a good and kind man, you see, and none were more horrified by the actions of the Eldian Empire than he. It is why, upon ascending to the position of King, he concocted the greatest lie that had ever been told -- he, along with my ancestor, would fabricate a story of how the evil Eldians were vanquished and exiled to their island."
Theo's lips parted, and little by little, with every word Willy confessed, his jaw dropped. Yet, Willy wasn't done. "King Fritz then enforced a vow of pacifism upon his descendants. One that cannot be broken so long as one with royal blood possesses the Founding Titan. This vow would ensure that when the rest of the world finally came for the Eldians of Paradis, they would accept the punishment for our sins and the world's hatred. The threat of the Rumbling was merely a pretence to allow them a time of peace before that time came."
Slowly, Theo closed his mouth and clenched his jaw. He swallowed down his evident surprise and focused not on the revelations of the story, but why he was telling it. "Then you suspect that the royal family has lost the Founding Titan."
"It is the most likely explanation," Willy confirmed. They couldn't confirm it. The only thing that they knew for certain was that the Titan Shifters hadn't returned, and neither had their scout ships. But given that for the past century Marley had chosen to punish Eldian criminals by turning them into Pure Titans and setting them to roam the island, and had done so without reprisal… something had clearly changed, and that *terrified* Willy more than words could ever convey.
"Which means that the threat of the Rumbling may no longer be empty," Theo continued, reaching for his own tea, and he fought the smallest tremor in his hand to take a sip. He composed himself excellently, however. "Is that why you recalled me?"
"Yes," Willy answered shortly. "In your mind, what is our best course of action? How do we deal with this emerging threat?"
"We can't share this information with the rest of the world, though it concerns them," Theo answered, setting down his tea. "They'll think we're desperate and making the entire thing up. Surrendering then revealing the information will seem like an excuse to remilitarize. Instead… we must act."
Theo straightened in his seat and continued to speak in a voice devoid

of warmth. "We consolidate our forces. No Eldians, except for the Warrior Candidates -- they may be tempted into joining their Devil brethren. It's no secret that resistance groups have been on the rise."
No, it wasn't. Millions of Eldians had perished in the war and most for little gain. When the consequence for obedience was the same as disobedience… Many were finding that they'd rather fight Marley than their fellow Eldians forced to fight on the opposing side.
"You would have us attack Paradis? Would that not risk the Rumbling?" Willy questioned sharply, interlocking his fingers and leaning forward.
"It's possible," Theo admitted. "However, by taking the initiative, we can prepare for that possibility. We commit our air force to dealing with the possibility of the Colossal Titans within the Walls -- our war games indicate that they can travel at thirty miles an hour. As such, it will take the Titans two days to fully leave their island. In this scenario, we can greatly thin their numbers and reduce the effectiveness of the Rumbling."
A hundred years had passed since King Fritz made that empty threat, and in that time, the greatest military minds in the world had poured over what they could do to prevent the Rumbling. There were countless answers that had arisen and evolved as the military progressed, creating new and better anti-Titan weapons every year. It would seem that Theo had his own.
"That will be difficult to arrange given the logistics necessary during a losing war," Willy noted, probing for a reaction.
"Which is why the objective of the operation shall be presented as regaining our lost Titans," Theo answered. "As it stands, our military is too dependent on them. We cannot function at optimal ability without the Nine Titans, too many of our strategies are reliant on their power. Worse, we do not have the time or capacity to change tracks in the middle of this war. So, we present the war on Paradis as a reclamation of our lost military might so we may then go on to win the war that truly matters, and in doing so, we can claim Paradis' vast resources."
Perfect. That… that was exactly what he wanted to hear, as utterly wretched as it was.
King Fritz was a truly incredible man, Willy reflected. He could gaze upon his people, love them with the whole of his heart, but still condemn them to the consequences of their actions. It was something that Willy found himself jealous of -- the strength of character and conviction necessary to do such a thing… he was incapable of it. Willy wished that he wasn't, but he didn't have the strength of will.
He loved Marley. He wasn't blind to its considerable faults. Nor the bitter irony that they were guilty of everything they accused the Eldian Empire of. But it was his home. His nation. His children were born and raised inside its borders, and should it fall… what would happen to

them? The Tybur family was beloved because of a lie, and there was no promise that their standing wouldn't fall alongside Marley's.
The thought of his children being condemned to the camps alongside the rest of the Eldians… if not worse…
"What do you need?" Willy asked, damning himself and countless others.
"The Warhammer Titan," Theo answered, just as Willy suspected. "Your family swore an oath of nonviolence, but these are the Devils of Paradis. Your family will be viewed as merely finishing what your ancestors Helos began. All the more so if the Devils truly do resort to the Rumbling."
Willy closed his eyes but even before he answered, they both knew what he would say.

…

"Gabi! Calm down!" Falco cried out, grabbing the back of her uniform as she nearly went overboard, discontent with the pace of the fleet.
The very moment that Paradis had emerged over the horizon, Gabi became fretful. Eager. She'd swim the rest of the way if she had to, just for the glory of being the first on its shores to exterminate the Devils.
"You're going to fall!"
"How can I be calm?!" Gabi shouted back at him, gripping her rifle that was as large as she was in her hands with white knuckles. "They're right there! After a hundred years, we're finally going to kill the Devils and show everyone what good Eldians look like!" This was her chance to prove it once and for all!
She, Falco, Zofia, and Udo were the only Eldians permitted on this mission. The only ones deemed loyal enough to exterminate the Devils. Their mission was to reclaim the Titans from the Devils, and it was their theft of them that allowed the war to begin in the first place. It was because of them that Eldians were dying in the *millions*.
"We're not even fighting on the front lines this time!" Falco argued, pulling her back fully so her feet were touching the deck of the ship they were on once more. Gabi tsked at the reminder before she glared up at the sky, which was filled with a distant hum.
There were *thousands* of airplanes flying above them. Cargo planes and the fighter planes that guarded them -- some of the cargo planes carried those chosen to parachute into Paradis, but most carried explosives to firebomb the Devil's cities. Likewise, the planes above guarded the grand fleet consisting of the three fleets of Marley, with each fleet containing twenty-one battleships, the entire remaining navy of Marley.
For six months, they had heard rumors about a great offensive. It was hard to hide the level of military build up, with Marleyans also being conscripted. But Gabi never dreamed that the great attack would be on

the Island Devils. Even now, at the helm of the greatest invasion in history, it didn't feel real.
"I wonder if the Warhammer Titan is on one of those ships? Do you think we'll get to see her?" Udo asked, sounding awed by the mere thought, and he should be. For the first time in a century, they would would see the power that drove back the evil Eldians.
"Of course we will!" Gabi answered readily, a wide grin on her face. "She'll fight the evil Titans so we can eat them." She remembered her briefing, word for word. The Colossal Titan was the top priority. If possible, it should go to Udo. Following that was the Armored Titan, which she should receive. Either that, or the Female Titan. The rest were desired, but not the highest priority.
However, because they were looking up at the planes above, they saw as they slowly began to react to something. Slowly, their gazes shifted towards Paradis, puzzled over what could have provoked such a response. And it was then they saw it.
"It's *them*," Gabi hissed, baring her teeth. If it wasn't a waste of a bullet that could be used to kill a Devil, she'd start shooting at the things that emerged from the island, which left a trail of smoke in their wake.
"They're planes," Zofia said, leaning on the railing next to her. They were a little too far to see easily, but she was right. They were planes -- Gabi could tell that much, but they looked funny. They only had a pair of wings jutting out the side and their bodies looked to be made out of metal instead of wood and fabric. Their general shape looked like an upside down V. "And they're… *really* fast…" Zofia continued, and Gabi realized she was right.
They had been sailing for a day because of the air fleet, and it was estimated that they wouldn't reach Paradis for another five hours. But the Devil planes were quickly approaching. Really, really, *really* quickly.
"I… think we should take cover," Falco muttered next to them, a note of fear creeping up in his voice.
"T-theres no need to be a scaredy cat, Falco," Gabi said, swallowing a lump in her throat. "We outnumber them a hundred to one. T-this is just… a desperate gamble to save themselves." She'd deny it if anyone ever asked, but fear was pooling in her stomach as she looked at the planes that were racing towards them. There were a hundred of them, if that, but she couldn't shake the feeling that something terrible was about to happen.
And then something did.
The Devil planes arrived within minutes, and it was only when they got close that Gabi fully realized how fast they were going. As they approached, they shot something forward that was attached underneath their plane wings, and it shot forward directly at the airships. The airships couldn't even begin to evade before they were

struck and the sky became filled with fire.
"No way," Gabi breathed, her eyes wide as dozens of airships ignited and exploded above them, the weapons meant to be used on the Devils instead exploding on board. The biplanes overhead attempted to intercede, but it was too late. There was a loud boom over them as the Devils raced by faster than anything Gabi had ever seen. A second later, she felt a blast of wind on her face. "Noo… no way…"
She ran to the other railing towards the back of the ship to see that the Devils were shooting more of those missiles, and without fail, they all struck airships as biplanes scrambled to react in time. Then, once they reached the end of their formation, the planes flew up before twisting. The sight struck an indescribable terror into Gabi's heart, watching as the remains of the airships began to fall, some hitting the biplanes that scrambled beneath them, before taking them down with them into the ocean-
"Gabi!" Falco shouted, grabbing her and tackling her to the side. She barely felt it and had no idea why he did it until something slammed into the top deck. Something wet hit her face and she went to wipe it away. Her fingertips came back red, and it was then the sight before her clicked into place.
A man had fallen from the airship above. His body was scorched and still burning, with his blood splattered on the deck from the impact. But only for a moment ,as the rest of the airship fell into the ocean nearby, sending up a huge splash of water that crashed down on them. The water hit Gabi like a fist, instantly soaking her to the bone. Falco had picked himself up by the time the body had been washed away.
"Hey… Falco…" Gabi breathed, her voice nearly lost in the sounds of screaming and chaos. "Where did Zofia and Udo go?" She asked, making Falco jump to his feet as he rushed to the railing. That was no good. She was the top candidate to become a Warrior. She couldn't let Falco show her up like this. And despite being a veteran of a hundred battles, Gabi found that her legs were made out of jelly for all the support they offered.
"Gabi! The life preserver! They went overboard!" He shouted at her, and that got her body in working order. It felt like lightning raced down her spine, but it shocked her out of her stupor. Grabbing the life ring, she raced to the railing to see Zofia and Udo trailing behind as they treaded water. Hurling it at them, they managed to grab onto it before they were out of range.
"Help me pull them up!" Gabi shouted and Falco obeyed, grabbing the rope and heaving with all of their strength. All around them was chaos. The deck of the ship came alive as the anti-air guns fired at the Devil planes that tore through their formation. More airships seemed to be falling out of the sky all around them, along with parts of biplanes.

Gabi only caught a glimpse of how.
The planes had run out of missiles, so they fired guns instead. Four at the front, but underneath the plane were round protrusions with gun barrels that moved and fired in every single direction as they passed through the sky. There was a flash of heat on her face as an airship crashed onto the battleship next to them in the formation, but she ignored it to pull her friends back over the railing where they flopped over, already shivering from the cold water.
"T-Thank you," Udo chattered, grabbing hold of Zofia tightly. Another explosion rang out in the distance, and Gabi could hear people screaming -- screams of pain. Screams of fear. Screams of order trying to impose itself on the chaos. The air became filled with an oily black smoke that drifted up and hovered near the water. Grabbing hold of her friends, she and Falco brought them to the middle of the ship.
And it was then that they saw it.
Gabi almost dismissed it as another explosion from a crashing airship, but the flash of light was completely different. She looked over in awe to witness the Warhammer Titan materializing from that golden light -- from her feet upwards, taking the form of a woman that was covered in a white armor with bars around her mouth and eyes. The ship that she stood on banked at the added weight, but it didn't sink. Leaving the Warhammer Titan free to create a crossbow that fit in one hand that she used to take aim at the impossibly fast planes.
It should have been a moment of triumph. A power not seen since the defeat of the Devil King. The power that brought the Eldian Empire low and put an end to the fighting.
It wasn't. Gabi's hope soon turned into dread when the planes began to form up in groups, circling above the Warhammer, before black figures began to drop outside of the planes. Gabi watched them fall towards the Wahammer, who lashed out at them, only for the figures to prove to be human, even if they moved like anything but. Wires shot out of their sides, attaching to the Warhammer before they began to fall upon her.
However, her attention was stolen when a shrill scream erupted from Zofia, and she looked over to see that more black figures were falling to the deck of their ship. They fell at such great speeds, moved so fast that they should have splattered like the man from the airship had when they hit the deck, but they landed lightly like falling hundreds of feet was no issue.
Fear. Fear was the only thing that Gabi could feel as she beheld the Devils for the very first time. They were cloaked in a black uniform with metal armor over it, and strange equipment that they used to fly around. She couldn't see their faces as they were protected by a tinted glass helmet. The only way Gabi could tell them apart was because two of them were women, the other three men, with one of the women

wearing a red scarf.
For a split second, nothing seemed to happen as both the Devils and the Marleyans froze. Then one of her countrymen managed to react, screaming in fear as he leveled his rifle at the Devils. He fired the first shot, but not the last, a hail of bullets striking the Devils. And, despite everything that had happened, Gabi felt hope surge in her chest.
But something was wrong. The Devils weren't dying. The flattened bullets fell at their feet, plinking to the ground instead of tearing through their wretched hearts.
The Devils lingered for a second more before they *moved,* and people started dying. Swords emerged from the cases attached to their legs, and they dove into the Marleyans. War cries became screams of terror as the swords effortlessly severed limbs and heads, carving through people like they were barely even there. Blood splashed over the deck of the ship, arcs of it getting sent up with every swing.
"Falco," Gabi breathed, realizing that she didn't have her rifle. She didn't even know when she dropped it. "We're… here to save the world from the Devils, right?" She whispered, frozen to the spot, watching as people died in droves. The Devils were utterly outnumbered, but it felt like it was the other way around. "Justice is on our side. So… why are we… losing?"
Falco didn't say anything, just gripping her hand with obvious terror as the world fell apart all around them. Gabi couldn't look away from the sight before her, but she could see out of the corner of her eyes as the Warhammer Titan was struck by explosions and started falling backwards onto the ship it was on. The battleship wasn't built to handle such weight in the first place, and almost like a toy, it seemed to snap in two.
Her mind raced, trying to think of something to do, but she couldn't think of anything. The Devils felt *invincible*. Nothing seemed to get through their armor. Their planes were too fast and powerful. The Warhammer Titan had already fallen, and it was sinking to the bottom of the ocean…
What could she even do? It wasn't even a matter of will. Gabi was frozen because there was nothing that she could *do* to stop this slaughter. This… massacre.
But then the Devils cut their way through the crew of the ship and all of the soldiers, arriving at them as the four of them were huddled together. The woman with the scarf had a blade raised high, already cutting through a man before them. She took a step forward, careless of the pool of blood that was dumped at her feet, and Gabi found that she could only stare at the woman, who seemed to freeze the moment her eyes landed on them.
"...Children? They brought children to a battlefield?" The woman

sounded scornful, lowering the sword before taking a step forward. Gabi's legs jerked and she found herself falling on her butt, trembling with fear. The woman seemed to realize it, so she put the sword away and offered a bloodstained hand. "I know… I know what you've been told about us. That we're devils. That we're evil. I know that you're scared right now, and I won't ask you to trust me. But you can see that it's not safe here, and you need to leave."

It seemed nothing less than insane that someone could callously cut down what seemed like a hundred people in seconds, to gently extend a hand and speak so soothingly. Gabi was reminded of her mom, and that's what sprang her into action. She couldn't surrender. Her parents would be punished if she surrendered. She would lose any chance that she had of becoming a Warrior and an Honorary-Marleian.

"A… AHHHH!" Gabi shouted, forcing her feet to move as she lunged with a fist. The woman moved and, at first, Gabi thought she had been cut down. Instead, she was redirected and put into a sleeper hold. She thrashed in the woman's grip, the others only then springing into action, but they were similarly grabbed by devils in black.

"I know it'll be difficult to believe… but when you wake up, the world will be different. It'll be a gentler and kinder place for Eldians. I promise," Gabi heard, her vision going black. She tried to gurgle out a response, but it was nonsense to her own ears.

Then, everything went black.

…

"Someone get rid of that armored train! It's anti-Titan grade! It'll punch right through our fortifications!" Colt Grice shouted at the top of his lungs, firing the last of his ammo down range at the approaching army. He was one of the last ones with ammo. The other Eldians in the trench alongside him had fired their last shots hours ago, and the only reason why he had any was because of his aim and the fact that he was a Warrior Candidate.

Something that felt so useless and arbitrary in the face of such overwhelming might. The Mid-East Alliance was pressing their line hard, and they had been for months. Constant redirections of supplies had drained Fort Florence, and the loss of the navy had them completely cut off. The Eldian Legions had always gotten the short end of the stick when it came to resupplies, but for months it had felt damn near malicious.

Colt would be willing to accept crates of sticks and stones at this point, because at least that would prove that Marley remembered them.

"*Incoming-*" Colt heard a split second before the world became noise with a high-pitched ringing in his ears. His lungs felt like they were full of dust, and he could feel rubble plinking off his helmet. He was still

alive. Still whole. Which was more than he could say for others when he looked over, seeing the devastation of the armored train. The weapon designed to kill Titans had reduced the men to his right into mist while causing the wall behind them to collapse, crushing more beneath a mountain of stone.
Colt felt someone grab him, and he looked over to see Porco Galliard, another Warrior Candidate, screaming in his face. Porco looked as terrible as Colt felt, and he felt like warmed over shit. Days without sleep. Days without food. All to stave off an onslaught for just one more day. One more hour. One more *second*. All for territory that was already lost, as near the entirety of Southern Marley was lost. And without a navy, they couldn't even leave.
Then, with a woosh, sound returned to the world, "-arge! Brace!" Porco shouted, and Colt looked over to see what he was talking about. His stomach plummeted when he saw what he meant. The Mid-East Alliance were making a charge from their trench. Colt's guts churned when he saw the armbands and the expressions they wore.
Fear. Their expressions were filled with fear -- not because of the guns that were pointed at them from the front, but because of the ones that were pointed at their backs. There was nothing to be done about it, however. It was life and death for all of them. They would die trying to take the crumbling fort, while more of his people would die defending it. Simply because failure meant death for both sides.
Colt leaned into what was left of the outer wall, counting his breaths as the tide of attackers rushed forward. They were out of ammo. The little that they would gain would come from the dead attackers who were lucky enough to be given some. The rest, they would fight without guns. Beating each other to death with stones, stabbing with knives… Not many would die in the attack itself, but disease killed with just a scratch. All the more so because the weapons were dipped in waste beforehand.
They had repelled charges like this what felt like a thousand times in the last month. Colt didn't know how many more he had left in him. How many the men around him had left in them. If life was hell, then death had to be paradise. The only thing that stopped him from giving up entirely was the thought of getting to go home. To see his family. His parents. His uncle. His cousins. Little Falco, who was so determined to fill shoes that were two sizes too big for him when he couldn't even confess to the girl he liked.
So, as the tide surged, he roared alongside all of the others.
Right up until the trench behind the attacking wave became filled with fire. Colt flinched at the sight, and a second later, a boom followed as some kind of aircraft flew overhead, flying down the line and bombarding it. However, Colt's gaze fell to what flew over the

battlefield. It looked like a little… He wasn't sure what he was looking at. It had a slim body, but on the sides of it, were round spaces that had something like a fan blade rapidly spinning within.
And that became all the more clear when a man emerged from the floating thing. Yet, while he was translucent and colored with a blue hue, he grew to the size of a Titan.
The charge stopped and everyone could only gape at what they were seeing.
"**My name is Galick, King of Paradis**," the figure began and Colt felt his blood freeze in his veins. The Devils of Paradis? This was their king?
He seemed to be in his twenties. Handsome. Almost to the point of being irritating. His hair was slicked back in spikes, except for a lock of hair that fell to an eye on one side of his face. He was muscular, broad-shouldered, and he wore an odd outfit that displayed that fact without reservation, while around his waist were cloth folds. He looked like he could be a king, Colt guessed, but he didn't know what kings looked like.
"**Here me now, Eldians. As of this moment, you are free from the tyranny that has oppressed you for generations**," he continued, and the world seemed to fall away around him. "**No longer will your lives be discarded by those who have no care for them. No longer will you be forced to fight on behalf of your masters, who don't even have the decency to give you weapons to fight with. No longer shall you hunger or thirst. No longer shall you fear the consequences of those who believed themselves your betters.**"
What…?
"What is happening right now?" Porco breathed next to him, thinking the same thing he was.
"**I sense your doubts. Your confusion. And your fear**," Galick continued, speaking to the entire battlefield at once. "**Allow me to put your concerns to rest**."
With that, the image of the Galick vanished, and Colt was staring into a new hell. The sea was on fire, and thick black smoke billowed up from dozens of warships. Debris from airships and biplanes floated in the dark waves, alongside the bodies of their crew and pilots. His breathing hitched when the image changed once more, and Colt found himself staring at the broken body of the Warhammer Titan.
"**Marley attempted to invade my kingdom in a pathetic attempt to stave off its inevitable end**," Galick said, his voice still coming out of the… Colt wasn't even sure what it was. It was like looking into a window, only instead of the outside, it was something that was happening thousands of miles away. "**For this, Marley shall fall to me**. **So shall it to you, who it has so ruthlessly oppressed**. **Your friends and family in the internment zones have already been liberated.**"

The window changed, and Colt's eyes watered. He saw the same planes that had just raced over the battlefield flying over the city of Liberio. He saw soldiers clad in black securing the internment zone, his home, and crushing the soldiers that had been stationed within since the conscription began. Tears began to blur his vision, and he was just one of many others looking up with expressions of hope.
"This has to be a trick," Porco muttered, his voice tinged with disbelief. "He's… they're Devils. This isn't a good thing, Colt." He stressed in a low voice, but Colt wasn't listening.
"**Cast off your chains of oppression and rise up as citizens of my empire!**" Galick commanded, reappearing and thrusting out a hand towards what felt like directly at him. "**I hereby declare this war… OVER!**"
Colt looked down at the rifle in his hands, and he could feel the eyes on him. Measuring him. Looking at him like he had any idea what just happened or what they should do.
His lips thinned as he looked down at the rifle, the weight of his own ignorance crushing him. This could be a trick. Or a lie. Or a test by Marley to see if they were really loyal. There were so many things that this could be other than what they said it was.
Yet, numbly, the empty rifle slipped from his grasp, and it fell to the ground. Next to him, Porco hissed a low breath, but it was swiftly drowned out by the sounds of other weapons being dropped. Then the sounds of cheering.
People just broke down, collapsing where they were, and started sobbing with relief. Others cheered as loudly as they could. Some even got out of the fort to wander down to the Mid-Easterners, who had been in the middle of their charge, to embrace them like they were long-lost brothers.
Everyone was tired. Everyone was sick. No one understood what had happened or what was going on, and it didn't matter in the slightest. Peace was declared… and so it was.
…
"Ten minutes!" Mikasa heard as she was seated upon one of the planes, the voice ringing out in her ear by a 'radio' built into her helmet. It wasn't unheard of technology to the broader world, but the equipment in the armor she wore was a highly advanced version of what they knew. With it, she could communicate with her squad effortlessly despite the chaos of combat.
Looking up, she saw her team making their preparations -- Armin, Connie, Marco, and Sasha. They were members of the Survey Corp and Military Police, but the Relief Regiment was proving to have a unique ability to recruit, however temporarily, soldiers from other branches for missions. Mikasa wasn't certain how exactly it came about, but she

suspected that it was due to Galick's influence, however unwittingly. They were the harem of the king, and all of them were recruited for their raw talent and skill. When several members of the Relief Regiment, herself included, expressed a desire to participate in the conflict, Galick had agreed. On the condition that no one pregnant with his child would join the fighting, and that was an easy condition to accept. With his backing, it became unofficial policy to give them whatever they wanted, and over the course of three months, that had resulted in the mix of divisions.

"Briefing time!" Hange exclaimed, and unlike the rest of them, she was the only one not wearing a helmet or glove. She was accompanied by her Survey Corp team -- Moblit Berner, Nifa, Keiji, and Abel. "Listen closely! This mission is a little complicated, but it should be super easy to pull off!"

In response, information began to appear within her helmet, a holographic projection within the crystal that protected her. Satellite images of a mountain range that was buzzing with activity. There were faces amongst the image -- military commanders who had managed to pull back or were away from the front when the invasion began. They were utilizing a cave network of natural caverns and former mines to mobilize throughout the area.

"Over the past month, we've been securing Marley. As of now, all their military bases have been seized by our volunteer militia, and all major cities have been taken. Their front lines have completely collapsed, and with the failed attack on Paradis, they have nothing in reserve." Hange outlined the situation, holding onto a railing as the plane hit a patch of turbulence.

Unlike the jet fighters, this plane was much larger. Large enough to fit two teams with the supplies they would need to carry out their mission. It was, however, still quite fast.

"However," Hange continued, her tone taking a serious edge even as she spoke with her usual excitement. "As Galick says -- the victor is only decided when the defeated view themselves as beaten. The remnants of Marley's command structure have retreated to Neimis mountain range, where they are attempting to organize a resistance." More satellite images appeared on her HUD, marking entrances and exits, munition supplies, and all other relevant information for their mission.

"Unbeknownst to them, we have *allowed* them to gather," Hange continued. "For the past three weeks since the Battle of Paradis, we have watched them pick up the pieces of their former nation and search for support both in former Marley territory and abroad. King Galick now feels that we have enough information to act. We will be crushing their remaining military structure and removing the web of

support that they've managed to gather over these three weeks."
There was a grim silence that answered Hange when they received their mission.
It seemed so… unfair, almost.
She knew what Galick would say to that -- 'There is no fairness in war.' Or 'If you aren't cheating, then you aren't trying hard enough.' Still, it felt so excessive at times. Because of Galick, the enemy never had a hope of reaching her home. She didn't pity those who came of course, except for the children who had been dragged along with the invasion. And she had been very happy to learn that those children had since been reunited with their families after the internment zones had been liberated.
But with the technology he had given them, the entire war had felt so very… one-sided.
Marley didn't even know that satellites *existed*, much less how to defend themselves from them. Because of it, their every move was well documented, as well as who they met with. They knew exactly how many they numbered, how well equipped they were, the identities of their associates and allies, and what their plans were as soon as they made them.
Across the nation, similar operations were taking place. Captain Levi and Captain Kenny were both spearheading similar operations against the other larger remnants of the collapsed army. The truth was, the war had been over by the end of the first week. The past two had just been cleaning up.
"We are catching them on the eve of a major coordinated offensive, operating in conjunction with other resistance cells within their captured cities and in other nations," Hange continued. "The Neimis Range contains eight thousand troops. Team One," she said, looking to Mikasa, "Your objective is to plant explosives to collapse the tunnels. As such, you will be the tip of the spear."
Mikasa nodded, knowing that much already.
"My team is focused on containment and distraction," Hange said, a certain kind of grimness in her voice. "We expect for them to pull inwards into the mines and caverns, so you'll encounter resistance. A lot of it. So, speed is our ally here. Get in, plant the explosives at the designated points, and then get out. After that -- our part of the mission is done. The Militia will be swooping in to take care of the rest. Hopefully, the remnants will surrender, but if previous examples are any indication…"
"Three minutes!" The pilot of the ship warned, making Hange sigh. She looked out at all of them, their faces hidden behind their helmets, but she met their gazes all the same. She didn't say anything more and just gave Mikasa a nod as they made their final preparations. The

holograms on her HUD vanished, and she stood up, lining up at the door.
She looked at her team, but her gaze lingered on Armin. Even with his face hidden, she knew her childhood friend too well to not see the nervous energy that possessed him. "Do you think… after this… it'll finally be over?"
No. Galick had told her as much when she asked the very same question after the Battle of Paradis. Even if he had said otherwise, she wouldn't have believed him -- she'd witnessed firsthand the depths of the hatred the rest of the world had for them in the years leading up to the invasion. And he had spoken to her of his plans for what came after everything.
"Yes," Mikasa lied, sparing Armin from the truth, if only for a time. He should have doubted her, but the words put him at ease. She saw some of the tension bleed out of his body language, and he offered her a small nod. With that, after checking each other's gear, it was time for the mission to commence.
The back of the ship slid down, revealing the mountain range below, and it was quite some distance down. A hand went to the scarf around her neck for just a moment before she took three quick steps and jumped out of the plane, free-falling straight down through the sparse clouds. Her team followed behind her, their helmets marking their destination. The sensation of free-falling never failed to cause butterflies to flutter in her stomach, especially when it felt like it went against her training to not look for something to hook into.
The ground rapidly rose up to meet them, and at a thousand feet, Mikasa gave the signal. They flipped and pulled the trigger to their new ODM gear. The tanks were much smaller but also far more efficient, giving them an hour of continuous use. The gas slowed their momentum, while Hange continued to speed ahead until the two-hundred-foot mark. She dumped her gas, killing her momentum, and then Mikasa saw it.
A flash of light like a ball of lightning formed, and from that light emerged the Armored Titan.
It wasn't the one that had ruined the peace of her life so many years ago. It was distinctly feminine, with armor-like plates over her body and Hange's mane of auburn brown hair.
It had simply been too much for her to refuse, Mikasa recalled. The idea of becoming a Titan had been irresistible, so when the time came for Reiner to be executed and for the power of the Armored Titan to go to another… Hange had jumped at the opportunity and all but begged Galick to choose her.
Hange slammed into the ground near the entrance of the mountain base, letting out a fearsome roar that Mikasa knew was actually her

yelling in excitement. She did it every time she transformed, and she transformed as often as she could.
While Hange wasn't Reiner, she was every bit as devastating as she swept an arm over the defensive line, smashing through the artillery positioned to defend the entrance to the mountains. Meanwhile, her team split up around her, both to hem the defenders into a certain direction and to make sure that Hange wasn't killed with an anti-Titan weapon.
Meanwhile, Mikasa and her team continued to fall the last few hundred feet to their destination -- an observation area near the top of the mountain. Despite falling hundreds of feet, Mikasa and her team landed lightly. The heat meter on her HUD jumped from 0% to 9%, but within five seconds, it had already dropped down to 8%. They secured the observation area, and in the corner of her vision she saw a small map of the tunnel system appear to guide them to their targets.
Breaching the door just in time to see a squad racing up to it, Mikasa was on point. The Marleyan soldiers recoiled the moment they saw her, their eyes going wide. They hesitated.
Mikasa didn't.
Her weapons didn't have any recoil as she shot them both in the face, snapping their heads back as blood splashed on the cavern wall behind them. Just as Galick had said, those who hesitated in battle died. Not every fight needed to be to the death, but mercy was the luxury of the strong, so when you needed to kill it was best to do it fast, clean, and without mercy.
They moved beyond the corpses, following Mikasa's lead through the tunnels that were filled with the sounds of panic. Speed was their ally in every mission -- they were always outnumbered, often ten to one. Sometimes a hundred to one, like now. So they sprinted through the halls, using their ODM gear to hook down the length of a hallway and pull themselves forward, or to pivot sharply around a corner.
They didn't breach the base without running into anyone. Mikasa found that she had grown used to the act of killing, her pistols expertly punching through the foreheads of the sprinting garrison that rushed to get into defensive positions.
When they encountered groups of soldiers, Mikasa switched her ammo types -- a tube at the base of the pistol and a trigger for the ODM gear, letting her send a fragmentation grenade down the hall to tear apart a dozen men. Screams of pain and fear echoed down the halls, but Mikasa paid them no mind, working in sync with her team, who covered their fast advance.
It was less than a minute into the mission when they arrived at the first target point, and Armin planted the bomb.
"It's primed! Eight minutes!" Armin warned, giving them an extra two

minutes for unexpected deviations from the plan.
With no time to waste, they pressed on, and the cycle repeated itself four more times as they delved deeper into the mountain base. In the minutes that followed, the Marleyan resistance managed to muster up a defense, but it did little to deter them. Their bullets struck their armor, and every one that did managed to increase the heat sink .2% closer to needing to vent. Something that would take thirty seconds, and that was something that they couldn't afford.
She could barely feel the bullets impacting against her armor, Mikasa reflected, pushing through machine gun fire before shooting the gunner in the head, then firing off another fragmentation grenade. There was a slight pressure, as if she had been poked by someone trying to get her attention, but no more than that. So long as they kept an eye on their heat gauges, they would be fine.
Five minutes later, Armin pressed the last bomb into the crevice of the cavern ceiling. "Bombs are primed and delivered!" He called out on the radio, and Mikasa nodded.
"Mission accomplished. We're leaving," Mikasa voiced, sending out a ping to Hange and her team as they followed the evac route out of the mountain. They didn't bother shooting their way out, simply using their ODM gear to speed by the rough fortifications that were going up because the Marleyans had expected to fight for every hallway and room.
By minute six, they were once more out of the mountain, using their ODM gear to freely maneuver through the trees as they converged on Hange's location. The entrance to the mountain was almost unrecognizable in the few minutes that had passed. Smoke rose up in thick black pillars to the sky, the explosive munitions exploding either from fires that broke out or from Hange's blows.
They latched onto her, along with the rest of her team, and Hange broke out into a sprint away from the mountain. Mikasa kept her gaze forward, looking out at the rolling hills that led up to the mountain and it was there that she saw it -- the Eldian military.
Those liberated from the warfronts and internment camps were allowed to volunteer to join the Eldian Militia, who operated equipment stolen from Marley or the Mid-East Alliance to become an army in earnest. And it was they who would be cleaning up the remnants that they left behind as-
Distantly, Mikasa heard an explosion behind them, and she looked over her shoulder to see that a landslide had triggered once the explosives went off in a chain reaction. The tunnels collapsed, killing all those within, while the mountain shuddered off thousands of tons of stone that rolled down it.
The mission was accomplished perfectly, as one would expect of an

elite team, but Mikasa found herself feeling…
"I want to go home," she whispered to herself, and only herself. She had just killed thousands, who only resisted them because of the hate that they had inherited and because they were invading their home. And, deep down, she knew that thousands more would perish before this war was over.
For so much of her life, whenever she thought of home, she thought of that sleepy house with the Yeager family. Of Grisha and Carla Yeager, who both welcomed her into their home after she lost her parents. Of Eren, the one who saved her and gave her that home when she lost everything.
But now, it was changing, ever so slightly. She thought not of the castle that she lived in now, but the people within. The family that only seemed to grow with babies being born almost monthly. The small army of mothers who doted on their children. And the children themselves, who filled the halls with peals of laughter as they fought over everything and anything.
She thought of Galick, who seemed to have endless room in his heart. He played endlessly with his children, always managing to make time for them despite his responsibilities and answering their ever-unreasonable demands. She thought of his dry amusement when the cooks openly wept at the amount of work they were being saddled with to feed the increasing number of Saiyans and how they complained about Sasha's appetite.
The castle had the warmth of a home.
And she wanted to feel that warmth again.

…

"Not bad," I muttered, looking at the hologram of Attack on Titan's version of Earth, standing in my war room in the capital. Alongside me were Commander Erwin and Commander Pixis, both looking at the hologram with a sense of wonder that they still hadn't shaken off, even if it had been around a year since I'd unveiled the technology to them. They also watched the shifting lines across Marley as points of contention vanished one after another.
Satellite tech was pretty simple when you came right down to it. It was just shooting something off into space at the right speed to get a stable orbit. Once we got a power grid up, that opened the path to computers. And with computers came programs that I could use to do all the calculations for me. Because, as the Saiyan Empire suspected, I didn't have the aptitude or the willingness to learn all that myself. It was for ease of use.
Iceburst crystal made for a fantastic propellant, to the point that even within the Attack Ball's schematics I couldn't find much better rocket fuel outside of outright anti-gravity tech. It didn't take much to reach a

stable orbit, and from there, we could toss up as many as we liked since it was technology that only we had at the moment. As such, we had a perfect view of the battlefield and beyond, complete with real-time viewing.

War was about information as much as it was weapons or people. We knew everything about our enemies, and they knew nothing about us. We possessed weapons and armor that vastly outpaced their arms and armor. Our jets were the equivalent of 5th generation fighter jets from back in my old life only better, with ultrahard steel, crystal-based computers, and iceburst stone-based fuel.

In essence, we were hitting them with 21st century military hardware while they were stuck with what amounted to pre-WWI technology. If not worse. While the electronic side of things was still in the early nineties in terms of processing power, I'd be willing to put one of my jets against a 5th gen jet fighter.

"This is what your people consider war, is it?" Pixis muttered more to himself than to me, clutching the flask in his hand with a tight grip.

"It's what *I* call war," I replied. Assassinations. Backroom deals. Four years of effort all for this moment, and I had to say, it was worth it. Our military utterly dominated Marley. The tech gap was just too huge. With the crystal armor alone we could have dominated them, the jets were frankly overkill. We didn't even need to perform all this backdoor diplomacy, really. But if we hadn't, then the takeover wouldn't have been anywhere near this clean.

It had been a month since we'd revealed ourselves to the world in an overwhelming display of force. Realistically speaking, the battle had been won on the first day. Marley had dedicated substantial resources to the attack on Paradis. It was an all-or-nothing gamble -- they had neglected their other fronts, allocating resources that should have gone to them and leaving their slave legions on their own with orders to die for every inch of territory. If it had paid off, they'd have Six of the Nine once more.

But it hadn't paid off. Marley was done, even if it was in denial of that fact. If not from my forces then the Mid-East Alliance, who would happily drag them to the table kicking and screaming to give it to them dry.

But I wasn't one to leave an animal suffering. In the weeks since our first move, we had been mopping up Marley. The liberated Eldians were equipped with basic armor and weapons, and they became occupation forces for the cities since we didn't have enough people. All the more so since squads of our soldiers were being sprinkled across the continent, teams of five being sent to military bases and slaughtering everyone there unless they found someone that had enough brain cells to surrender to a 'Devil.'

Most didn't. For the Marleyans, this was their worst nightmare made manifest. So many simply didn't consider surrendering an option.
"Then the plan remains unchanged," Erwin noted, enraptured by the hologram. "Once Marley has been conquered, we aid the Eldian rebellions throughout the world. The estimated timeline is still correct?"
"Hm. We're ahead of schedule," I noted. We were watching the last traces of Marley resistance falling in the interior of the continent. And it only took a month because of the transports delivering the occupation forces and organizing the fractured nation. "Mikasa, Levi, and Kenny's teams can start the flight over to the Mid-East Alliance. They're already fracturing as it is."
"It seems too easy," Pixis noted, looking down into his flask.
To that, I snorted. "If it wasn't easy, then we'd have wasted four years." This was the equivalent of spending four years getting jacked in the gym and taking MMA lessons to jump a baby with whooping cough. If it was anything other than a completely one-sided beatdown, then it meant we were idiots and wasting our time.
But, with Marley's fall, it was time to look elsewhere.
Hizuru was already ours because they were the AoT equivalent of North Korea in terms of diplomatic isolation, which made Mikasa their equivalent to a Kim Jong Un who had been lost to them for a century. While the whole plot point had been an outright ass pull in canon, I had to say, it was very useful for our plans.
Promising them the territory that they lost over the past hundred years -- coastal islands and such, along with territory that had been on their wishlist, like this world's equivalent to Australia, Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and strategic control of territories in China... Well, it was the Not-Japanese Empire's wet dream.
The Americas, which were called Acirema in this world, were only just now being colonized. Flipping the equivalent of the thirteen colonies had been outrageously easy. They were already chafing under taxes without representation and all that. A little display of power that rendered the Titans useless, and thus their greatest fear of what would happen if they raised a rebellion? Easy and done.
Meanwhile, the Mid-East Alliance was a feisty bunch that hated each other only a little bit less than they all hated Marley. Stuff some pockets, slit some throats, and the whole alliance would come undone.
"In the next three weeks, the other nations will be destabilized and overthrown with friendly governments, with the exception of Hizuru, of course. In six months' time, the unrest will be quelled." Meaning the trouble makers would be dead, and the rest will have found that living under my boot wasn't so bad. With advanced technology, farming methods, and the like -- life was going to get a whole lot better for a lot

of them.
"In three years' time, the first line in our grand-scale projects will be completed," I continued. Intercontinental railways. Large-scale urban development projects designed to guide the explosive growth that I knew the human race was sprinting full speed ahead at. In about a century, the population would jump from around two billion to eight billion. Likewise, projects like energy production, agricultural development, and more were going to be built to future-proof the planet.
Meanwhile, the vast resources of the planet were going to be harnessed and exploited. All to build these large-scale projects, and to develop some others.
"And after that, King Galick?" Erwin questioned, and I offered a thin smile. The man had stars in his eyes. There was a time where I had thought that learning what lay beyond the Walls would have broken the man. Or at the very least, made him lose his edge, the edge that made him sacrifice hundreds of recruits to distract the Beast Titan so Levi could get the job done. But it seemed that the goal post had only shifted for him.
"I was sent to this system to restore the Saiyan Empire," I began, making a gesture at the hologram to make it shift. "The Old Empire wasn't worth much, but when it came to conquest, few knew their stuff better. They sent me to an out-of-the-way cluster at the very edge of the galaxy… and gave me as ideal a start as they could manage."
The hologram of the planet zoomed out to show the local star system, much to Erwin's amazement. The man carried himself with a quiet joy as he inspected the next and largest expansion to his world - the worlds that shared a star with his. There were six planets in the system, but due to the size of the yellow star only three of those planets were in the Goldilocks zone, with the others outside of it with a large asteroid belt dividing the six planets in half.
"This planet is yours," I said, highlighting the planet in the middle of the other two in the Goldilocks zone. "These other two, however-"
"They're occupied?" Erwin interjected, and he only seemed aware of it after the words left his lips. "Ah, my apologies, King Galick."
"Nothing to be sorry for -- you're right. They're occupied," I confirmed. My Attack Ball had released that information the moment we put satellites in orbit, as well as details about the planets. "This planet was assigned a threat ranking of point one. The one closest to the sun was assigned a threat ranking of Null. The furthest received a threat ranking of one."
"And what exactly do these threat rankings mean?" Pixis questioned, eying the three planets. Four years was a long time to know someone, especially when you had as many meetings with each other as we did.

I could tell he knew where this was going, and he was adopting a 'wait and see' approach before reacting.
"Null essentially means that even if I gave the entire world an opportunity to hit me with everything that it had, it wouldn't be able to so much as draw a drop of blood," I answered. "A threat ranking of one, however, indicated that while a single Low-Class Saiyan like myself could conquer the planet, it would be a *fight*."
It was a testament to how far we had come when that information gave them a sense of distinct unease rather than interest at the thought of gaining a silver bullet to use against me.
"The next three years are going to be crucial. Neither of these planets possesses any space flight technology, so as of this moment, they are not a direct threat against us. But just because they don't doesn't mean others won't. For that reason, the space elevator, star fleet, and shipyard are all high priority." I continued, looking between the men to see that their gazes took a hard edge.
And that was why I had spent four years of my life committed to this method. It was one thing to force someone to follow you because you had a gun to their head. It was another to have them willingly follow you wherever you pointed.
I had kept my word for four years. Everything that I'd warned of came to pass. And, because of the preparations that I began, not only had the Titans been eliminated but a greater threat that surely would have wiped them off the map before my arrival was dealt with without a single casualty.
I had earned their trust. Their *faith*. And their loyalty.
"Hm. Before we think of expanding to other planets, we should first secure our grip on this one," Pixis noted, and I nodded.
"Agreed. No point in looking next door if we have trouble in our own backyard," I agreed. By my estimations, it would be about ten years before the planet really came to terms with becoming a space-faring civilization and for the old lines in the sand to fade from memory. Probably. Attack on Titan's humanity sure knew how to hold a grudge. But time and distance would help deal with the issue. Likewise, adding more people to our empire would dilute the bad blood.
By the end of the decade, I wanted to have this star system firmly in my grasp. All three habitable planets, bound together underneath my banner. I wanted to harvest the asteroid field. I wanted to begin terraforming the three uninhabited planets in the system. I wanted to terraform their moons. I wanted to build space colonies. I wanted to build space fortresses.
Not all of it would be ready by the end of that decade. Honestly, that was the work of a couple decades. And that wasn't an inconsiderable part of my life to stay in one small star system, especially one so weak.

I had a solution to that… and I think it was finally time to put it in play.
Adjourning the briefing, we parted ways and began to head to put the pieces in place. However, as I did so, I sensed a couple presences following me through the halls. A sly grin tugged at my lips as I pretended to not notice them, nor their giggles when they thought they were being sneaky and getting the better of me.
Changing my route, I headed towards the gardens to give them plenty of space. They had learned to be patient, I realized with some pride, as I made a show of heading to a tree where I usually took a nap. That pride quickly turned into exasperated amusement when I heard a loud shout of, "SNEAK ATTACK- oof!"
Elery aimed a kick at the back of my head, and I pivoted on a heel, grabbing her leg. Her bright blue eyes were wide with shock, and her black hair was pulled back in a short braid, while she had a matching lock of hair falling towards one eye. With a swipe, I sent her body crashing into my eldest son, who had attempted to drop kick the back of my knees.
Rako, my son born to me and Rico, had stark white hair and black eyes. Beyond that, he was almost a carbon copy of me, down to the hairstyle. His expression was one of resigned acceptance as I batted him away, Elery shouting all the while, before I slammed her into my second oldest child.
Eshallot, a daughter born of Nanaba, who grunted as she shoved my fourth oldest and second son, Taron, born from Sasha, out of the way. Unlike his brother, he favored Sasha more than me with reddish brown hair and golden brown eyes. Eshallot however favored me more with my black hair and eyes, though her hairstyle was different than mine.
Hybrids were weird, and there was no telling who would get what genes. It was a relief to see that at least all of them had a tail. And that even upon just being born, they were powerful. A power level of 5pl might not seem impressive by Saiyan standards, but considering that it was the same power level as a fully grown man armed with a shotgun? It was very impressive by human standards. And as they grew older, the bunch of them now three year old toddlers, their power levels had increased.
They might not have the same explosive potential as Gohan, but they did have the same limitless potential that all Saiyans possessed.
"Get him!" Bayne, my son with Hange, shouted as he fired off a weak ki blast from the bushes. Oh, they had learned about ranged support already? Batting away the blue ki, I sent one of my own back at him that struck him in the head.
"Stop using me as a weapon!" Elery shouted, stomping on my wrist to escape my grasp as I hit Taron with a back swing. "You said only cowards use weapons! Real Saiyans kill their enemies with their fists!"

"I'll save you, Elery- *oof*!" Paya, my daughter with Ymir, shouted before I threw Elery at her, knocking them both over.

I'll admit, using one child to bludgeon my other children wasn't exactly the best look, but for Saiyans, it was the equivalent of wrasslin' and horsing around. They were fine. And, to prove it, they were already on their feet with wide smiles.

They threw themselves at me with a reckless abandon that only children were truly capable of. Just pint sized aggression unleashed upon a target that they knew that they couldn't break. Not all of them had that Saiyan urge to fight as strong as others -- Elery was probably the most 'Saiyan' out of the hybrids. She wanted to fight every second of every day, and when she wasn't fighting, then she wanted to eat. Paya, however, probably displayed that instinct the least. However, she was attached to Elery at the hip, so she was usually dragged into whatever ruckus Elery managed to create.

'*It's a nice moment*,' I thought to myself, gently sparring with all of my children. Well, at least the ones that were here -- the rest, I could sense, were where they were supposed to be at the moment. School.

The Relief Regiment had undergone some changes over the past few years. The birth of Elery had been something of a catalyst for it. The core idea of it was sound -- Saiyans, frankly, were overpowered. Even if all of humanity were Ackermans, fully equipped with the technology that I introduced, and even if they were enhanced with Titan Shifter powers… it was simply no contest.

My children, at three years old, could lay waste to Paradis' military. Meaning that, no matter what, having a lot of kids was in my empire's interest.

I just… stopped thinking with my dick. Or, rather, I thought *less* with my dick. The idea of the Relief Corp was still appealing -- an independent military force that answered directly to me, and were the mothers of my children, thus causes for loyalty. However, what changed was that I got more… picky. It wasn't enough to have a pretty face and some skills in combat.

The thought of bringing spies into my home hadn't bothered me initially when it had just been me that they could take a shot at. My kids caused that perspective to breakdown rather harshly.

The result was that the Relief Regiment had shrunk down significantly over the past couple of years, becoming a handful of core members. Some of them were a one-and-done, like Hange, who had Bayne, and rejoined the Survey Corp.. Others joined, had a child, then retired to inactive service or from the military itself at their promised barony. Likewise, the rate that I was having children slowed significantly after the initial… well… batch, I suppose you could call them.

At the moment, in the four years since I had arrived on this planet, the

Saiyan population had exploded from one Saiyan to twenty.
That number would increase, of course. Especially as I scouted other potential partners to bring into the Relief Regiment.
"What are you lot doing out here, hm? Class should still be in session," I noted, blocking a high kick with my forearm while sweeping the feet of Rako when he went low.
The question got a telling pause and a few guilty glances before Elery spoke up, "It got canceled. For… forever," she blurted. She paused, as if she were examining the lie for any gaps, then nodded to herself in satisfaction, confirming that was, in fact, the story she was going with.
"That so? Then if I ask your mothers about that, then they'll say the same thing, would they?" That got bullets of sweat, but to their credit, they doubled down and stuck with the lie. "In that case…" I trailed off, looking over at three women who were entering the gardens, likely drawn in by the noise.
I saw Pieck, Ymir, and Historia all approaching the gardens, drawn to the noise.
Historia looked equal parts exasperated and fond as she watched us.
"They're meant to be studying, Galick," she chided, wincing ever so slightly when I made Rako and Taron headbutt each other.
"They ambushed me. Didn't have a choice but to defend myself," I replied, grinning as I grabbed Elery and gave her a noogie. The shout of rage she unleashed was worthy of a Super Saiyan. "But, you're right. Sorry, but the day isn't over for me."
"Nooo! I don't wanna study!" Elery cried out, and you'd think I was sentencing her to death based on that reaction.
"What's wrong with studying?" I asked, flicking her ear. "Daddy studies all the time." I had to for what came next.
"That's because you're dumb and you need to. I'm smart!" Elery huffed, rubbing her ear and I just shook my head at her.
"Off to finish conquering Marley?" Pieck questioned, her tone light for all the weight the words carried. She had settled in well, I think. I'd brought her dad from the interment zone, and by the time she saw what we were building… She had been fence-sitting up until that point, ready to betray either side. And that lasted right up until she realized that it was impossible for the rest of the world to win.
"Something like that," I deflected with a smile. I liked Pieck. I just knew better than to trust her, especially with the secret that I was about to put to rest. "I'll be back later, kids. After second dinner- I promise," I added upon seeing the immense disappointment on the kids' faces. But the promise mollified them, and I extracted myself from their tangled grips. Elery, Paya, and Lotus all went straight to their mothers in an attempt to convince them that they didn't need to go to school. As they did, my gaze lingered on them before I turned away and flew

off.
Paradis Island was an island of secrets, even before King Fritz arrived. And I had been using it to keep a few of my own. Before it became where he and millions of others came to die, it was the personal pleasure palace of the Eldian kings before him. As one would expect, when someone possesses absolute power… they tend to be little shits. The rest of the world was stupid about it, but it couldn't be denied that the Eldians of yore had absolutely deserved every drop of hate and vitriol. Their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren though? Not so much. But, it couldn't be denied that the Eldians had been a bunch of sadistic bastards riding high on being at the top of the dog pile for about two thousand years.
There were old castles and villas dotted around the island. They weren't in great condition after a century of neglect and wayward Titans getting curious and taking a peek inside. But they still stood, and it was one near the sea that I arrived at. I landed before the secret entrance and rolled the stone I had covering it over.
Then, slowly, I reached up to my scouter. "Attack Ball. Arrive at my location with stealth mode still engaged," I ordered, which would give me a few minutes before the Attack Ball arrived. Meanwhile I walked down the steps, with each footstep echoing down the stone halls that wound down and down for a good thirty feet.
Arriving at a door, I pushed it open to reveal what had been an Eldian sex dungeon. It was a wide open room, and inside there were three people. The most notable of which was the one on my immediate left, who greeted me with a huff of breath that stirred the entire room. Looking over, I was greeted with a familiar smile. A dull, blank look, vacant eyes, yet a wide smile stretched across her cheeks.
The Smiling Titan.
Dina Fritz.

Mother of Zeke Yeager.

I had told everyone that the Titans had been eliminated from the island, and that was true, except for the ones in the Walls and… *her*. The Titan that consumed Eren's mother. The first wife of Grisha Yeager. A member of the royal family, with royal blood flowing through her veins.
It was just her head that was down here. So long as the nape of the neck was intact, a Titan could regenerate. And that's what they used to do in this fucked up dungeon. Marley forgot that Eldians could be every bit as cruel to fellow Eldians as they could be to others. Some noble, or king, would turn someone into a Titan and carry the severed nape down here to put them in the spot she now occupied. A massive O-gag would be fit into the Titan's mouth, and the vents would open to allow sunlight to reach the Titan so it would become active.
That had been a revelation and a half when I found this place.

"Any issues?" I asked, looking at the other two occupants in the room. One of them was myself. He sat in the air, balancing on the tip of his tail, as he meditated before a large crystal with a woman in it.
Lara Tybur. Sister of Willy Tybur, and the Warhammer Titan. She was pulling the same trick Annie did in the show by encasing herself in crystal as she waited for the opportunity to escape. The reason why I had a Clone staying here with her was to make sure that she didn't.
"You'd know if there were," My clone remarked, holding out a hand, and I reabsorbed him, along with half of my ki. The memories settled, and I realized he- that I had stumbled onto an interesting idea for a new technique. Something to try later.
Lara was in the center of the room, with an altered Healing Pod filling the right. It wasn't a normal one, as I had designed it with one particular purpose in mind. I double-checked to make sure that everything was ready to gonwhile my Attack Ball was descending. Every movement I took was slow and deliberate, done with the utmost care because, as much as I might plan and scheme, this was the moment that could make or break me. The fluid was alright, the machine was primed… all that was left was to just… do it.
It still felt too soon when my ship arrived and I ventured back up to look at it once more. I hadn't seen it since my first day here, but it still looked the same. And when I looked through the window, I saw the original protagonist of the story.
Eren Yeager. Still in his cadet uniform and still fifteen years old. The hibernation function of the ship put the body in such a deep sleep that you were functionally dead except for basic brain activity. You didn't age, you didn't grow. You just sat there, dead to the world, until the function ended.
"Hello, sleeping beauty," I remarked to Eren, double-checking his vitals to make sure that he was still alive. He was. Just…
Not for much longer.
"I am sorry about this," I told him as the Attack Ball's door opened with a hiss of pressurized air. Reaching in, I grabbed Eren by the shirt. "And I'm sorry for tossing you in there so haphazardly. I was on something of a power trip, you see. The world wasn't real to me yet. It was a fictional setting, you all were a bunch of characters, and you felt like a roadblock to my enjoyment. I mean it -- I'm sorry," I told him as I dragged him down the stairs and back into the dungeon.
"I have children now," I continued to justify myself as I laid Eren on a table that was attached to the healing pod. "Friends. Lovers. I care about this world and what happens to it. The thought that there could be something out there that could just arrive on my planet, take the place over, kill my kids and me? That keeps me up at night." I confessed to him, ripping off his jacket and shirt and placing him face

down onto the table.
A small sigh escaped me as Eren was injected with a drug to make sure he stayed unconscious. He couldn't hear me, but I continued all the same. "I'm doing this because I'm afraid," I confessed to him. "I'm afraid that I won't be strong enough when the time comes. When we venture out into the stars and find something hostile, or something hostile finds us -- I'm afraid that I'll fail. I'm afraid people I love will die. I'm afraid that my children will die."
I swallowed a lump in my throat and breathed deeply. "There's something in your head that can make me stronger, Eren. So, I'm going to take it from you even if it means killing you. It doesn't change a damn thing for you, but I'm *sorry*. I'll make Mikasa happy. I'll make sure Armin sees things he's never imagined before. That's a promise from me. But… you're still going to die here." Mikasa couldn't ever learn of this. Armin either.
If this secret got out, I'd lose every shred of their trust and loyalty that I had earned up until this point.
So, I wouldn't let it.
Closing my eyes, I reached up and plucked a hair and imbued it with a portion of my ki. Just a sliver of it. The very lowest amount I had managed to create a Clone with was the equivalent of 5pl worth of ki. The one I created had a power level of 10pl, allowing him to split once. I spent four years mastering the Multiform technique for this day, and it had finally arrived.
My clones were me. Meaning that they were a valid target for the Founding Titan to latch onto. Likewise, by having it attached to a clone, I could mitigate the risks to myself.
"Wish me luck," my clone said, climbing into the healing pod and I began the sequence of filling it up. The clone was quickly submerged, and… there was only one thing left to do.
I pressed the button to begin the operation.
The table that Eren was on was enclosed before it too began to fill with healing fluid. The capsule around him was all clear crystal, both to let me see the operation and to prevent the little eldritch being hiding in Eren's spine from escaping. Once the tank was full, Eren floated for a moment before a blade passed through his neck, severing his head. Blood erupted from the stump of his neck, and fast as a whip, I saw it. A silver white, faintly translucent worm with writhing stubby tendrils erupted from Eren's neck in an attempt to reconnect with the head, only to be blocked by a wall that had acted as the blade. It fully emerged from him, and unlike its canon appearance, it was barely a foot long. It writhed in panic and fear, and it was at that moment that a port opened up on the side of the dome.
The creature sensed my clone and sped through the port into the

healing pod, and I watched as it attached itself to my clone's spine. The creature was a curious thing. I couldn't really sense it with ki. It was there, but its presence felt… fuzzy and weak. My scouter couldn't detect it all. I did feel, however, the jump in power that my clone had -- from 10pl to 125pl. I guess Saiyans were more compatible with it.
"Sorry, Eren," I told him again, because the procedure wasn't done. If it was just this, I could probably save his life. It took a bit for the brain to die, and with the healing fluid, I could put the head back in place, and the wound would heal up. I had no idea how I could explain his survival and disappearance, but there wasn't anything directly tying him to me beyond the fact that he disappeared when I arrived, but that was circumstantial and as far as anyone knew I didn't have any motive to kidnap him for four years, then return him.
But, it wasn't just this.
Eren had been able to maintain his Titan form even with the bulk of the creature severed. And, in the ending, there had been a montage of the decades or centuries that came after the events of Attack on Titan. The tree that Eren was buried under grew to be gigantic, and the spitting image of the tree that Ymir had stumbled across two thousand years ago. We didn't get to see it, but a boy and his dog found the tree with the theme of 'the cycle continues.' Meaning that there was still some of the creature left in Eren's head.
To get it out, his head and brain were destroyed. Sure enough, in the bloody fluid, I saw the head of the creature -- it was a featureless nub except for two antenna-looking things emerging from the top. The second the port opened to the healing pod, the head grew a body from nothing, slithering forward like a snake, before it rejoined with the rest of the body that was now residing in my clone's spine.
"Oh," I remarked, sensing my clone's power level jump to 500pl. I'm not entirely sure why as of yet but I would get answers in due time. The clone took a moment before he began the draining procedure, while I went about disposing of Eren's body. Once the fluid was drained, my clone emerged from the pod. "Feel any different? Your power level spiked hard."
"Not really?" My Clone replied, his brow furrowing. "And there was nothing. No Ymir or the Paths."
I figured as much. "Well, you're connected to it now. Zeke called the thing a 'mindless god.' Ymir is the one who gave it a will. She didn't reveal herself to Eren when he ate his father, so she might not care unless you're interacting with royal blood." I ventured, offering a small shrug before I turned my attention to Lara, who remained unflinching in the stone. Another sigh heaved out of me.
I had hoped that I could use either Reiner or Bertholdt for this, but they were eaten years ago.

Hange ate the Armored Titan, even knowing that it'd reduce her lifespan to a mere thirteen years.
Bertholdt was eaten by Hannes, the Garrison drunk, who had turned his life around after Wall Maria fell. He was a trusted subordinate of Pixis, and he wanted him close back during the days when he was planning on killing me if he had to.
Ymir the second, Pieck, and Annie were out. I needed the Founding Titan, and the Attack Titan was a package deal with it. The Beast Titan was currently a four-year-old, and I wasn't callous enough to to feed a kid to a Titan when there was one other option left, which was… Lara, the Warhammer Titan. The real kicker was that it had to be a Titan Shifter with royal blood. Otherwise, Eren wouldn't have needed to jump through all those hoops with Zeke and touch Historia's hand to begin the Rumbling.
"Sorry about this, but I don't have better options," I told her before I swung a fist at the crystal. It shattered under my fist as I tore through it, cutting Lara in half before me and my clone grabbed the two halves and rushed them to the Smiling Titan's head.
Only the spinal fluid needed to be consumed. Eren proved that when he ate the Warhammer Titan.
Sure enough, the Smiling Titan erupted in steam and I moved it forward. The moment that the spinal fluid hit her tongue, Dina began to emerge from the nape of the neck. She was a blonde woman, completely naked, and in her mid twenties, I think. Grabbing a blanket, I threw it over her and saw that she was starting to wake up already. However, I took a step back and allowed my clone to approach. Passing it to him, I got out of sight to avoid confusion, and I heard him approach the waking Diana. "Wh… what? Where am…I?" She slurred, sounding like she had just woken up from a bender. Or a nightmare that had lasted about twenty years.
"My name is King Galick of Paradis," my clone told her, laying the blanket over her. "I'm sure that you have questions, and I promise, I'll answer all of them. Can you stand?" He asked her, standing up and offering a hand.
"Y-Yes! Thank you-" Dina cut herself off before, all of a sudden, her breathing hitched. They had made contact. Royal blood with the power of a Titan Shifter, plus the Founding Titan. That was a straight ticket to the Paths. I expected something a bit more grand when they entered, or left, but all I heard was an "Oh? We're back?"
Time meant nothing in the Paths where the past, present, and future were happening all at once. A second in real time could be centuries in the Paths.
At that second, I revealed myself, and Dina didn't seem surprised to see me. Her brows furrowed a bit, but there was no reaction beyond

that. Meanwhile, my gaze was affixed to my clone, who was looking back at me with a cocky smile. That was a promising sign. "So? How'd it go?"

My clone's smile grew as he offered a hand, "Merge with me and find out." He said, and the confidence that radiated off of him was compelling. With a shrug of my shoulders, I reached out and allowed my ki to flow into him as his body housed the 'Source of All Living Matter.'

And then I saw *everything*.

...

Looking back at this chapter, I wish I had done one more prior to the timeskip to help make the transition a bit smoother. I think I will do that whenever I come back to this story at some point. But, beyond that, we have one more chapter of the Attack on Titan jump to go.

Kid list.

Historia - Elery - girl - 3

Rico - Rako - boy - 3

Nanaba - Eshallot - girl - 3

Sasha - Taron - boy - 3

Ymir - Paya - girl - 3

Hange- Bayne - boy - 3

Chapter 6

"So, this is the Paths, huh?" I observed, finding myself in an immense wasteland. The ground was made of a white sand that stretched on forever in every direction. Space meant nothing in the Paths, as shown by my ki sensing hitting its limit long before I reached the edge of this dimension. Before us, however, was a great tree made of pure light while upon its branches were countless stars, almost like leaves. "It's beautiful. A bit dull, but beautiful.

"What is thiplace? Where are we?! What's going on?" Dina exclaimed, pulling the blanket around her tighter as her gaze darted around, increasingly fearful and bewildered. I gave her a moment -- it was a big day for her. She'd spent twenty years as a Pure Titan, and now she was in a alien dimension. Being overwhelmed was completely understandable. She looked up at me, "You said… you're the King of Paradis? The last remnants of our people?"

"I did. And I am," I answered easily, looking around the Paths. I couldn't sense Ymir. "You've been a Pure Titan for twenty years. A lot has happened since then, but the important bits are this -- I fed your Titan form the Warhammer Titan, and Marley has fallen. The Eldians are liberated." A gasp ripped from her throat as she looked up at me wide wide uncomprehending eyes, but I wasn't done. "This place is called the Paths. Think of it as a hidden world created by Ymir, the person who first found the Hallucigenia and with it, the power of the Titans."

I crossed my arms and sighed, "I had hoped to talk to her, but it looks like she's avoiding me. That's unfortunate." I muttered, thinking that this wasn't the best start. But, I was still feeling confident. I had four years to puzzle out the time mechanics of the Paths, and the Attack Titan's ability to perceive the future by inheriting memories of its future holders.

The answer I arrived at was rather simple.

I was in a time loop.

There was no other explanation that fit. With how the Paths functioned, where the past, present, and future were all happening at the same time, the present had been decided two thousand years ago when Ymir first arrived in the Paths. I, in function, was a bullet fired from a gun -- my destination was set, and every second until my arrival was me moving closer to that destination. Eren, in canon, had been at the end of the time loop that was established two thousand years ago as the Titan powers had died with him.

But I had inherited both the Founding and Attack Titan. My clone on the outside of the Paths, possessed the majority of my power in case this went wrong. Honestly, it was a pretty futile gesture to allow me to feel

like I had some control over the situation. I didn't.
The one who had the control… had just revealed herself.
"Is… that her? Is that the goddess?" Dina breathed, looking out at the tree of light to watch Ymir approach.
I felt a stirring of pity for her. Ymir was a child around thirteen or fourteen years old. Her hair was a dull blonde, her eyes a light blue, but they were downcast. Her clothing was poor -- woven linen that was frayed, stained, and torn. All of the power in the world, but she was broken down by it.
It felt both like an hour that she was slowly walking towards us and seconds. She left a trail of footprints in her wake as she approached us, and without so much as glancing in my direction, Ymir walked by me to kneel at Dina's feet. The woman was startled, looking down at Ymir with utter confusion before she looked at me, then back at her. "I… Goddess Ymir… please do not bow to me. It is I who should bow to you."
And, as if to prove her point, Dina got onto her hands and knees and did exactly that. I searched Ymir's expression but there was nothing. A corpse had more life in them than the little girl. The only reaction that Ymir gave was mindlessly obeying the order not to kneel and stood up. Diana seemed delighted with the progress, at least until she looked up to find that Ymir's expression was still blank. Empty.
"K-King Galick," Dina started, looking at me once more. "What… is happening?"
That was an excellent question and, frankly, I wasn't entirely sure. I was a complete non-entity to Ymir. I scratched at my head before dropping to a squat so I was around her eye level. "Ymir, are you happy here?"
She could hear me, at least because, slowly, she turned to face me.
And I just felt bad for her. Attack on Titan was borderline grimderp levels of brutal, and none expressed that more so than Ymir. Her life was ruined because of King Fritz attacking and raiding her home, enslaving her along with everyone else she knew, and cutting out their tongues.
Unloved and unwanted, she empathized with pigs that were trapped and being raised to slaughter. She freed them, and that decision cost her everything. She was betrayed by her people, hunted down like an animal, and it was then that she stumbled across the Hallucigenia. Her life was saved by it, but it cost her everything, even if it took her years to understand that fact.
She returned to the tribe that betrayed her and the man who hunted her. Fear had molded her and made her subservient. Loneliness and the yearning for connection had made her mistake abuse and rape for love. King Fritz had used her as a tool, and Ymir simply hadn't known any better, mistaking that for the connection she had so desperately

sought.
Then her life came to an end at the tip of a spear, saving King Fritz's from an assassination. It was then that she realized that she was not loved. That she was just a tool for a decrepit old man to cling to power. She lost her will to live and, because of it, she perished. Her children were forced to devour her corpse, dividing the power that Ymir had stumbled upon but never understood.
It was sad. It was so damn sad that it pissed me off to hell and back. It made me *wish* that I arrived two thousand years ago to put King Fritz into the fucking dirt where he belonged. But, I hadn't.
"Two thousand years is a long time. Longer here, I feel," I continued as Ymir faced me, her gaze still vacant. "You've been diligent. Faithful. Without fail, you did everything that has ever been asked of you, no matter how unreasonable. But are you happy here, Ymir?"
Ymir's lips parted like she intended to answer but no sound came.
I pretended that she did. "I can't imagine how lonely it has been. How *difficult*," I said, reaching out to her hands and taking them in mine. Her hands were rough with calluses and littered with old scars. "I have inherited the Hallucigenia, Ymir. That means… you're free."
That was the first thing that got a reaction out of her. A slow blink was my response as if she were sluggishly understanding the words. "You can leave this place if that's what you want. With the power of the Hallucigenia, a new body can be built for you, and you can simply… leave. You can be given a new life, and I *swear* to you, I will make sure that this one is kinder to you. You can be happy."
Standing in the Paths, I hadn't realized how right Zeke was when he called the Hallucigenia a 'mindless god.' Ymir had been hurt and scared, hunted by men who had already taken her home and tongue, when she found the Hallucigenia. And it was her desires that shaped how its awesome power was expressed.
She was small and weak, and so with the Hallucigenia, she became large and powerful.
She was crippled and maimed? She was made whole.
Perception and desire shaped the power. There was no reason that a Titan Shifter *needed* to hurt themselves to transform. But they had to because of Ymir -- she had been hurt before she used the power, thus it became a condition. The reason why Titans only functioned during the day? It was because the Hallucigenia had been bonded to a tree for who knew how long, and it was exposed to photosynthesis. While the Hallucigenia wasn't limitless, it did have a very vast range of what was possible with it.
Ymir withdrew her hands and gripped her dress, and there was something tightening in her expression. Fear, I think. Apprehension. Change was a scary thing, I think.

"Or," I swiftly continued, "I could stay here with you. So you won't have to be alone." I offered before I plucked a single hair from my head and divided my already limited power in half. In response, a clone took shape, and Ymir looked to him. "He's me. And I'm him."
"I can stay with you here," my clone offered. "You've been at this for a while, so I bet you have plenty of tips to teach me!" My clone continued with a laugh.
Ymir looked at me, then at my clone. Slowly, her grip on her dress lessened.
"I don't understand," Dina interjected. "I thought… I thought she was a *goddess*." She muttered, looking at Ymir was a growing pity.
"She's not a god. She's not a devil. She's not a slave either. She's just a person who the world has been too cruel to," I answered, not looking away from the god before me. "So? Would you like me to stay, Ymir?"
Ymir didn't respond for a long second that felt like centuries. Tears began to well in her eyes and, timidly, as if she was afraid that this was all one big trick, she offered the smallest of nods. For all of her power, she was just a lonely little girl who had only known pain. It was long past time someone had balanced the scales.
"Great!" My clone said, reaching out and scooping Ymir up so she sat on his shoulder. "I'll be in your care, Ymir!" He said, shooting me and Dina a smile before the two of them began to walk towards the tree of light. Ymir seemed a little surprised, but I think I saw a ghost of a smile tugging at the corners of her lips.
"I don't understand. I don't understand anything," Dina said, still dealing in the sand, naked with only a blanket covering her. "I thought… I thought…" She couldn't even finish as she watched my clone and her god vanish from sight. "The world doesn't make sense anymore."
"Well," I started, taking a seat next to her. "We got nothing but time here. So, I can answer the questions that you have before we leave." Better now than getting bombarded after we leave.
Dina asked her questions, and I gave her the answers that I could. She didn't seem satisfied with some of them. Others broke her heart, like learning that both Grisha and Zeke were dead. Some elated her, like learning how Marley had fallen and that the Eldian people were free once more. A few, however, utterly baffled her, like the knowledge that I was a Saiyan. An alien from outer space.
We talked for days. Weeks, I think. Maybe even months. We didn't sleep, thirst, or grow hungry in the Paths. And, little by little, Dina came to grips with her new reality.
Once she did, we left the Paths and found ourselves once more in the freaky sex dungeon. Dina blinked, "Oh? We're back?" She muttered, looking around in confusion before her gaze flickered over my shoulder. There, my clone emerged from his hiding spot, his arms

crossed and his gaze searching for signs that I had been mind-whammied. I gave a broad grin in response.
"So? How'd it go?" My clone asked, and I presented a hand to him.
"Merge with me and find out," I told him. This body housed the Hallucigenia, meaning that from this point onward, it was my 'real' body. Every time I used the Multi-Form technique, the clones had to be reabsorbed into me rather than the other way around. There was an eldritch being in my spine, and I didn't want to do anything that'd mess with it.
My clone hesitated for just a second, searching for any sign that I had been compromised by my time in the Paths. Then he shrugged and accepted the hand, and I felt my ki flow back into me, restoring me to full strength.
Pressing the scouter that was now on the side of my head, I did a self-scan.
I had arrived on this planet with a power level of 1,574pl.
Four years later, with my limited forms of training, I had been able to increase it to 3,691pl. Compared to Goku or Vegeta's training, it wasn't that great. Only getting around 500pl stronger per year. During the initial year, I saw my biggest growth of over 600pl but the gains were smaller every subsequent year. It was purely because I lacked the proper tools to push me to the physical limits.
Now, bonded with the Hallucigenia, my power level jumped to 5,500pl. Compared to my progress before, it was a pretty substantial jump in power, but raw power wasn't where the Hallucigenia's true value resided. Not even close. That was just gravy, honestly.
"What happens now, King Galick?" Dina questioned, rising to her feet with a helping hand from me.
"First, we'll get you some clothes," I answered as my head was already swimming with possibilities. So many that I almost didn't know where to start. There was no real rush, I had to remind myself.
If there was, then the me in the Paths would kick over some future memories to nudge me down a certain path. Unless it would be advantageous for me to get caught off guard. And even that, as monstrously powerful as that was, wasn't the true strength of the Founding Titan.
"Then you can get a front row seat to see the new world order," I said, scooping Dina up and earning an embarrassed noise from her. Walking up the stairs, I saw my Attack Ball resting idle, awaiting its next orders.
There was a reason why I had chosen to do this now. Marley was conquered, and it was only a matter of taking the rest of the world down. There were years' worth of projects I would need to begin before this world of Attack on Titan was ready to take to the stars, but that didn't mean I couldn't get a head start on some side projects.

After kicking the boulder back over the secret door, I used the Multi-Form technique, portioning off roughly 1,500pl worth of my ki into the next clone that stepped into existence. Diana made a noise of awe as she watched him appear. It was a chunk of power, but I didn't need it, and it was better served elsewhere.

This clone was different than the others, however. Before, they were clones made of ki in the shape of a person. This one, which emerged from my back like I was stepping out of him, was created with the power of the Hallucigenia -- the 'Source of All Living Matter.' The result was that the clone was made out of flesh and blood. Rather than a use of the Multi-Form, it would be more correct to say that I had just created a living clone of myself.

"See ya' in three years," my clone said, already knowing his mission as he tossed a wave over his shoulder before getting inside of my Attack Ball. Before, all my clones had an inherent shelf life. They couldn't generate their own ki. With the mere act of existing, they would slowly burn off the ki I had imbued into the piece of hair, and once they ran out, they would vanish. However, now, the clone was alive. Capable of generating his own ki. Which meant that, in theory, he could continue to exist *forever*.

And that opened up a lot of doors for me when it came to conquest.

"Don't goof off the entire time," I replied, watching as the door closed with a hiss of air. The Attack Ball rose off the ground, calculating its trajectory, before it suddenly launched itself into the sky above. Dina watched it go, clutching me with a tight grip.

"Where is it going?" She asked me, and I offered a thin smile.

I didn't answer. "You'll find out in a couple of years. I don't want to ruin the surprise," I fibbed, just a little bit. Then, to distract her, I began to fly up. That got a noise of pure amazement from her before I flew off in the direction of my capital. One thing stood out to me first and foremost in regards to the Hallucigenia's power, and it was a significant reason why I had decided to bond with it instead of sending the damn thing into the sun.

But, before I did anything, I wanted to be there first hand to witness the potential effects. I needed to start small, then work my way up. I knew how the Hallucigenia worked in canon, but Saiyan biology was being thrown into the mix and I didn't know how that would affect anything.

Touching back down in the gardens, I saw Historia, Pieck, and Ymir were still having tea in the garden while the kids had wandered off for other entertainment or to dutifully study. Pieck was the one who noticed me first, and there was a spark of amusement in her dull gray eyes. "I see what you were busy with, Galick. Womanizer."

That brought the others' attention to me, and Historia gave me a pout. Her cheeks puffed up, and her eyes narrowed into a glare that was

more adorable than anything. "Harlot."
Ymir, the holder of the Jaws Titan, just gave a grin, "Well, you have good taste at least." Dina looked between the three of them, uncertain of what to do.
"Oi. First of all -- member of a near-extinct species," I reminded, pointing at myself. Ymir snorted into her tea, and it sounded a lot like 'lecher.' "Secondly, she's not here to join the Regiment. She was a Titan up until like five minutes ago. I fed the Warhammer to her-" both Pieck and Ymir spat out their tea before coughs erupted from them, the tea going down the wrong way. Serves them right.
Historia, however, narrowed her eyes and the adorable pout melted away into what I recognized at the 'Queen' look. "I thought you said there were no Pure Titans left on the island?" She asked sharply.
"Ah. I lied," I admitted with a small shrug. "I was keeping her in reserve because she had royal blood, like you. So, she's your cousin or something. I think. I'm not too sure how humans trace their lineage," I admitted, because that had been true even as a human. That got the sharp glare to melt away while Dina immediately perked up.
"I'm Dina Fritz, your majesty. I would curtsy, but..." Diana trailed off and Historia immediately stood up.
"There is no need, cousin!" Historia said, striding over to Dina to gently take a hand. "We'll find you something to wear. You can have one of my dresses," she added, patting her hand. Dina shot me a quick glance and I nodded with a small smile.
Historia didn't go through her character arc because of me. There wasn't ever a reason for her to. She never had that moment when she needed to confront herself like she had to when Rod Reiss had been pushing her to eat Eren. As a result, that visage that she wore was still in place, but as the years went by, it was slipping. But, what hadn't changed was her obsession with family. Which told me that bringing Dina to her was the right call.
"If you were planning to feed the Warhammer to her, then you could have brought her clothes," Pieck noted.
"I still don't get you humans and your hangups about nudity," I replied, watching as Historia led Dina into the manor, joined by Ymir. "Being naked is the natural state of literally every single other animal on this planet."
Pieck simply sighed before she took a sip of her tea, the little that was left in her cup. "So you've said," she remarked dryly before she cast a knowing look at me. "You've had Lara Tybur for weeks now. And, evidently, a Titan with royal blood. What changed for you to suddenly act now?"
As expected of Pieck, she saw right through me.
"Because I've consumed the Founding Titan," I admitted to her, making

her eyes widen. "Well, it was more of a squiggly centipede-looking thing. Took me a while to find it on the island," I half lied. Pieck was usually smart enough to see right through me and pick at my half-truths, but she simply didn't know enough about the Founding Titan to break apart that one.
"... Oh?" Pieck responded, placing a hand on her swollen belly. "How exactly did it get lost?"
"The Founder, Frieda Reiss, was killed by someone when the Walls fell. And I accidentally killed the only witness who could tell us who," I admitted, walking over and taking a seat next to Pieck. "Historia's father, Rod Reiss. Apparently he was the only survivor of the massacre, and I killed him to inspire Premier Zachary to rebel and because he pissed me off." To that, Pieck gave me a rather pointed look that I ignored.
"The Founding is different. Your powers as the Cart Titan are derivative of it, but the Founding is the whole package. That's why instead of being reborn in some kid, the damn thing must have slithered out of the body and found some water that it slumbered in until about... tenish minutes ago," I continued, lying like a liar, but mixing enough truth in there to throw her off the scent.
Pieck looked down at her empty tea cup, "The Founding Titan has always been the most powerful of all. You can control Titans, alter the biology of Eldians, erase memories, or create the Walls." Pieck listed off, before she stilled when I placed my hand over hers.
"Or, remove a Titan from someone," I noted, and Pieck swallowed thickly. She, Reiner, Bertholdt, and Annie had all gotten their powers at around the same time. Pieck and Annie had both entered their final year before the curse would take them.
"Will it hurt?" Pieck asked, and I shook my head.
"I wouldn't do it if it would," I admitted to her, and she breathed a little easier. Then, with a single curt nod, she gave me her answer on what she wanted to do.
I didn't feel anything but a soft gasp escaped Pieck. She blinked a few times before looking down at her hands. Then, unceremoniously, she bit her thumb hard enough to bleed, but no steam erupted from the wound. "It's that simple?" She asked me, and evidently so.
It almost seemed dangerous how easy it was. I had been half figuring out how I would express wanting it to happen by the time it was done. I guess that was a perk of having a clone of myself in the Paths. I knew how I thought.
"That simple," I agreed, and Pieck gave my hand a soft squeeze. "I'll do the same for Annie later today."
Honestly, it would be easier to just remove the thirteen-year curse. She could have kept her Titan powers, just as Annie could keep hers. That

curse only existed because, in a bitter twist, the Hallucigenia misunderstood Ymir's actions. Thirteen years after she bonded with the Hallucigenia, she had been struck by a spear and realized that she had been nothing more than a slave to King Fritz. Because she gave up on life, it thought thirteen years was how long Shifters were supposed to live.

It was pretty good news for me. My Plan B had been to eat myself every thirteen years using the Multi-Form technique. It was why I mastered it to the point that I could use it with so little ki -- so I wouldn't lose too much power when I ate myself rather than reabsorb my clone.

But, the reason why I took the Cart Titan from Pieck was simple.

I liked her. I was fond of her. Honestly, she was one of my favorite characters in Attack on Titan, and that only became more true once I got to know her. But I would never fully trust her.

"Thank you, Galick," Pieck said, standing up to lean forward and kiss me. It was an earnest kiss that conveyed her feelings -- she had been facing down her last year of life, coming to grips with the fact that she would die before she could see her son grow into a man. The kiss went on for a long few seconds, her hands cupping my cheeks until-

"Ewwwww," I heard Lotus cry out, sounding absolutely horrified by what he stumbled across. I felt Pieck smile into the kiss before leaning away. "I think I'm going to hurl. Uggh… ughhhhh~!" My son with Pieck was identical to me beyond inheriting her dark gray eyes. He was younger than his siblings by a year, but he was growing like a weed, and he inherited his mother's razor-sharp mind.

Pieck had been right back when I confronted her in the prison cell. She hadn't been trusted until she bore my child.

"Good," Pieck replied, casting a fond look at our son. "Stay that way. Otherwise, you're going to become a lustbound beast like your father."

"Again. Member of a nearly extinct species," I pointed out fondly. Though less so every year now. But, looking over at Lotus… I had some apprehension about trying this first on one of my children, but now I had a better idea of how it worked… I trusted the me in the Paths. He wouldn't steer me wrong. And, even if he would, he wouldn't harm our children. "Lotus, could you come here for a second? And tell me if you feel something weird."

Lotus hopped and skipped over, standing before me and bouncing on the balls of his feet. Reaching out, I pressed a hand on his head and tapped into the Hallucigenia's power. The power of the Paths.

'*Upon reaching the age of twenty, reduce the aging of all Saiyans, Eldians, and Saiyan-Eldian hybrids to one-third of its current rate.*'

Lotus blinked, "I felt something weird?" He noted, sounding a bit surprised, and so did Pieck, who shot me a questioning glance. "It felt like… your weird face!" He blurted with a grin, thinking nothing of it.

A small breath of amusement escaped me. "I'm always up for a good 'your face' joke, son, but they at least need to make sense." I pointed out, feeling confident that it was fine. With that order, the biology of all Saiyans, Eldians, and their hybrids was altered. They would live for *centuries*. And that was without the various life-extending technologies that my Attack Ball had downloaded.

To no one's shock, no one wanted to die. Anti-aging technologies were at the top of everyone's list when it came to medical breakthroughs. Some species managed to get closer than others.

As for myself, however…

'*Make me immortal*.'

I felt a tingle in my spine as the change took effect. This would have been impossible with Ymir. In the end, Ymir was a girl who was born two thousand years ago in a small tribal village. What did she know of science? Biology? It wasn't her fault. She couldn't have learned even if she wanted to. My clone, however? With him in the Paths, the Hallucigenia could begin to live up to its potential.

And that was the true power of the Hallucigenia. With a thought, and what I imagine was a load of effort in the Paths, I had just drastically lengthened the lifespan of my people and children while making myself immortal. I could make it so that every child that I sired from this point on was a full-blooded Saiyan, just as I could ensure that specific traits were always passed on -- like the Oozaru transformation, our innate ability to use ki, and the zenkai boosts.

Or I could have my children slowly become more Saiyan as they age, shedding their human heritage and keeping only the best traits of them. Or I could turn every Eldian into a Saiyan, if I wanted to. And that was just the start.

The Super Saiyan transformation was biology. The Wrath State? Super Saiyan 4? Maybe even the Saiyan God form -- All of it was biology, and I had the key to the kingdom with the Hallucigenia.

"Your face doesn't make sense," Lotus shot back, breaking me from my thoughts. He really had no idea what had changed within him. Most of them wouldn't. Not for years, if not decades, when those close to me found that they were aging with far more grace than others… or not at all. I wanted to be immortal to allow me to build my empire without time constraints -- what was a decade in the face of a potential millennia? Everyone else, though -- that had to be a choice that they had to make.

"Better," I encouraged, pinching an ear. He hissed, throwing up a handful of feeble blows, but he quickly grinned when I started to spar with him. Pieck watched with equal parts exasperation and fondness as I left the table, saving her questions for a more private time.

I hadn't realized it at the time, but I truly had lucked out being sent to

this planet. It had everything that I needed to really build something. The idle power fantasies I had before were fun, but this was real, and I wanted to build something that would last. Something that wouldn't fold because a bigger neighbor came sniffing around.
Emperor Vegeta hadn't realized it, but he gave me everything that I needed to do exactly that.

...

Just as I predicted, it took about six months for the fighting to quell. The militaries of the world had been shattered, and my armies picked up the pieces. There would be resistance groups -- I never dreamed that there wouldn't be. The hate ran too deep for it to just vanish, and it wasn't like the Eldians had been particularly graceful in their victory. Nothing was more savage than a beaten dog that finally got a chance to bite back at the one who beat it. We did what we could to curb the worst of it, but it happened, and, frankly, it was going to continue to happen. Human nature was a bitch and a half that wouldn't change any time soon.
But, beyond that bit of unpleasantness, the transition of power had been relatively smooth. Our backroom deals took effect, and entire governments had been replaced, slotted in by puppets who had sold their people out for personal short-term gain. They wouldn't hold power for very long -- just long enough for my control over the planet to spread from one lone island to the entirety of the world.
The grand-scale projects that I had listed began production, mobilizing a significant portion of what had been the ruling class that suddenly found themselves ousted. My intercontinental railroads were being constructed, not with the idea of the meager steam engines in mind, but high-speed bullet trains that could travel the length of Marley within a day. Power stations that could provide energy for the entire world had their foundations laid.
As it was said, idle hands did the devil's work, and I didn't want any idle hands. In the three years it would take for these projects to be complete, or make significant enough progress that I could begin phase two of my development plan... that'd help bind the planet together.
And I had a couple of things that could help along the way.
"Radios, TVs, and holograms," I muttered to myself, inspecting my appearance in a full-length mirror. I didn't really need to. I looked as I ever did since my final growth spurt. Handsome, powerfully built, and standing at *just* under six feet tall, irritatingly enough. I could fix it, but it seemed so petty to use the Hallucigenia to give myself an extra inch of height.
I wore my black body suit that clearly marked my muscles with a folded length of red cloth wrapped around my waist, much like the OG

Broly. I cut a certain kind of image that I was leaning into because, for many, this would be the first time that they had ever seen me. Looking human was out of the question, and while I needed to present myself as 'other' it couldn't be too much or in a negative way.
So, showing off how handsome and powerful I am was the way to go.
It had been before my time, but the TV had completely changed how presidents were elected. Just like the radio had before them. It allowed potential leaders to interact with the population in ways that the population hadn't grown used to yet. People were more inclined to trust a handsome face with a nice voice, after all. I didn't need votes, but it'd be a lot easier for me if the planet wasn't in a constant state of rebellion every time I took my eyes off it. So, this was the time to make an *impression*.
Turning away from my reflection, I turned my attention to the massive crowd that was gathering outside. The preparations for this had been underway for months, so all I had to do now was some last minute practice for the real thing. No hiccups.
"Time for the world to see me," I muttered, leaving the room as the countdown began. There were servants and attendants running in a flurry of activity through the castle, most of them not even having the time to bow even if they noticed me. I moved with a sense of purpose, my hands curling into fists at my side, and my expression settled into the stoic one I had practiced in the mirror.
Arriving at my own front door, I waited about thirty seconds while an attendant gave a count down before the doors were opened for me. It was then that I was greeted with a cheering crowd that numbered in the hundreds of thousands, all of them packed in like sardines in the designated area before my castle where my speech would be carried out. The stairs had been modified leading up to my front door, a long platform was built that had a podium at the end of it.
To my sides were those who made this possible.
Erwin Smith, Dot Pixis, Nile Dok, and Dhalis Zachary standing at the front of them. Behind them were the regiment leaders -- Hange Zoe, Miche Zacharius, and Traute Carven. Behind them were the squad leaders -- Levi Ackerman, Kenny Ackerman, Mikasa Ackerman, Rico Brzenska.
Then, on the other side of me, I had the world leaders who had sold the world to me for personal power and prosperity. I didn't like most of them, even if I did find them useful. Of course, there were a few exceptions -- Historia was on that side of the frame. She stood alongside Kiyomi Azumabito of Hizuru.
In the air around me were the drones that watched every move, and through the cameras attached to them, the video feed was being broadcast all over the world.

From TVs in people's homes to massive holographic screens that were projected over mass gatherings in every single notable city and town on the planet. I wouldn't be introducing myself to everyone, but of the 1.7 billion people that lived on this planet, I would expect that at least three fourths of them were watching me stride towards the podium.
I found that I was calmer than I expected. I guess at some point I had just gotten used to public speaking. So, at a leisurely pace, I arrived at the podium and the crowd of hundreds of thousands before me erupted into cheers. However, I raised a hand to silence them, and it only took a few seconds before they did.
"My name is Galick, and as of today, I am the king of this planet," I began and I couldn't lie -- that felt good to say. It was such a strange thought, but I started on this path on a mere whim. A 'why not?' Or a 'what's stopping me?' I half did it just to see if I could. "The former governments of each nation are hereby dissolved, and the territories within have been absorbed into my empire. Thus, making every person on this planet one of my citizens."
The crowd before me was hopeful. Stars were shining in their eyes. Some were weeping with joy. To them, I was a savior. I had slaughtered the Titans, and I had protected them from a hostile world. I'm not sure if they could approve of me any more than they already did. However, I imagine the proclamation wasn't being received with the same fervor everywhere.
"Five years ago, when I arrived on this planet at the behest of the now defunct Saiyan Empire, I did so as a refugee. One of the last members of my species, as we had been hunted to near extinction," I said the words even if I didn't fully believe that story any longer, or think that the fate was anything less than utterly deserved. "I was sent here to rebuild. To repopulate. I was sent here, to this world, because Emperor Vegeta looked to Planet Eldia and he saw your potential." Not even a lie -- it was just that potential was that of slaves and slave soldiers.
"Potential, however, is useless unless harnessed," I continued, looking out over the crowd and the world. "For throughout your history, humanity has divided itself and then fought over those divisions. This, under my rule, will be brought to an end. You are all my citizens, and you are beholden to my standards. My laws. You have been united in a way that you do not yet understand, but you shall learn. All opportunity is equal in my empire, but those who rise do so because of merit."
Easy to say, harder to do. Meritocracies have problems of their own, after all. The top consists of those who are extremely capable and ambitious. But that would be mitigated by the fact that I would remain at the top due to raw physical power, if not because of the loyalty that I would cultivate over what would become centuries.
And, failing that...

There was a reason why I chose the Eldian race to elevate. Them being the underdogs was part of it, as it made them reliant on me, thus making it easy for me to insert myself into a leadership role. But there was also the factor of the Founding Titan to consider.
Ymir could only alter those that had stemmed from her bloodline, and only those that hadn't diluted that connection too much. Likewise, my clone in the Paths could only alter those that came from my bloodline and me.
By elevating the Eldians, I could better control humanity.
Just as the old nobles declared they would do to the rebels in canon -- I could alter their memories to make them loyal to me, to forget the cause of their rebellion, or to reduce them to a state that they couldn't even tie their shoes if I felt like being cruel.
It would take time to perpetuate. Decades, at least. But with the changes I had made to Eldian biology, it was only a matter of time before that trickled down to the rest of humanity.
"As such, all citizens are entitled to basic rights such as food, shelter, and education. Beginning at the age of five, from this point onward, all children shall receive a basic education lasting for ten years that will cover subjects and sciences that your people have yet to discover. At the end of this basic education, there will be a term of military service lasting three years, unless selected to receive higher education. After serving military service, you may pursue higher education at your own discretion."
It was authoritarian, but that's what I was looking for. It wasn't easy to turn a civilization that hadn't even discovered satellite technology into a space-faring one in a reasonable amount of time. It was complicated introducing maths and sciences that humanity hadn't even thought to discover. Worse, half of the leading experts were working with incorrect information built on incorrect assumptions and theories. That transformation didn't just happen overnight.
No, that was the work of decades. And this was what I was doing to make sure the brightest made their way to the top.
It was inhuman, but it wasn't insaiyan.
"There is now a single unified military force," I continued. "It is broken up into five divisions -- the Survey Corp, the Garrison, the Military Police, the Regulars, and the Navy." The Relief Regiment would still exist, of course, but that wasn't something that would go well with the rest of the announcement. "The Survey Corp are an elite division whose primary efforts are dedicated to scouting uncharted territory and operating behind enemy lines. The Garrison is for regular soldiers to be stationed and hold military bases to secure our interests both here and abroad. The Military Police investigate criminal misdoings and illegal activity. The Regulars are active military personnel who

serve as the vanguard for military action. The Navy are responsible for controlling the seas, the skies, and space."
If it wasn't broken, then don't fix it. Each would have its own list of subdivisions. Engineers to maintain equipment and technology. Scientists and diplomats for the Survey Corp, who would be the first ones to encounter aliens and survey planets. The Navy would be a Navy and Air Force rolled into one. The Regulars were the armies that we would invade with, while the Garrison would hold the territory that we claimed.
Independent government structures would focus on the development and implementation of technology. My Attack Ball had a lot of stuff in it, but that didn't mean it had all the answers. If it did, then the Saiyan Empire wouldn't have fallen. No… it was a jump start, but only that.
"On a more regional level -- your country and its institutions no longer exist," I continued, my tone blunt and unyielding. "Territories are controlled by regional directors, who oversee the directives given by me for the cultivation and development of these territories. Magistrates govern smaller territories within these territories and are beholden to the constituents within -- they will ensure that laws are followed, that you, my citizens, receive the standard care that you are entitled." Then, once we expand from this planet, each planet would have a representative.
Then each star system.
"Additionally, there is a single fiat currency -- the credit. Exchange rates for the now defunct currencies vary by region, but by this time next year, standardized pricing will go into effect," I continued. Couldn't do with having multiple currencies for a single planetary empire. "All citizens shall receive a monthly stipend of one thousand credits to be paid towards housing, food, and transportation."
Capitalism and Communism, when taken to their logical extremes, tended to end up in the same spot -- monsters, morons and rich people at the top, and everyone below them struggling just to survive. That being said, there were useful aspects of the two opposing financial philosophies that could be implemented into one. People with money spent money. People who didn't have to worry about food or rent were happy, and happy people spent money. Provide incentives and opportunities to make more money to buy better things, and most people would be willing to put in the effort to better their lives.
Some wouldn't, of course. But even societal dead weight had its uses. Food and shelter, in the end, were problems of the past. As things were, the human race already produced enough food to feed everyone several times over -- it was just an issue of transporting it. With my railways, fleets, and stasis technology? That food could reach everyone. Space? Two billion people on a planet already left more

room than one would expect, but outer space also offered countless opportunities to expand and relocate the population.
The stipend would cover just enough for the basics. What you would need to survive, and no more. But that stipend could be increased -- by having children, joining the military, going to college, and so on.
The military was the big one, however. I, possibly more than anyone else in the galaxy, understood how dangerous the galaxy was. As such, I was determined to frontload the military. Not to the point that everything other than it was a house of cards, as the Saiyan Empire had been, but I fully intended for the military to be the face of my empire.
"All of this is so you, humanity, can embrace your potential," I continued. "The excuses that held you back and got in your way have been removed. Everything that comes next, how you succeed or fail, shall be determined by your own will, ability and talent. The universe is not fair, and neither am I. No one in this world is created equal, but I can and have leveled the playing field for you and all shall receive equal opportunity."
I took in a slow breath and let it out. "The coming days will bring change. I understand your hesitation. Your fear. They are natural," I acknowledged. "Which is why I make you this promise -- ten years. In ten years, there will be a referendum, and if you are dissatisfied with my leadership and the changes I have implemented, then you may vote to let your voice be heard. Should the majority of you prove dissatisfied, then you have my word that I will vacate my position as king and leave this planet with my children."
No shot of that happening. In ten years, society will have advanced massively. Every house would have a TV. A microwave. Hot water and a shower. People would never need to go hungry again. Diseases that had plagued humanity since the time of cavemen would be eradicated. What's more, people would have simply gotten used to the new way of life.
But the illusion of choice was one hell of a thing. People could be convinced to do anything if they thought it was their decision.
"Today is the first day of a new world. A better world. One filled with opportunities that had been denied to you for a thousand and one reasons before, or simply because you didn't know they existed. Today is the first day of a brighter future where all of humanity strives towards a common purpose and for the benefit of all. It is fine if you don't believe my words. Instead, I ask that you watch my *actions*, and that it is by them that you judge me and the new world order that I have established." I finished, and the crowd before me erupted into cheering.
The hologram cut out, and I blew out a small sigh as I looked back at the others.

What came next was essentially a brown nosing and patting yourself on the back competition. This was a formal party where the most powerful people in the world tried to establish a pecking order on who came after me. Because, despite everything I had just yapped about -- scum was just as likely to rise to the top as cream.
Just about every single one of them were the type to sell out their nations and their people for a bigger slice of the pie. And it was because of that they reached this room, sipping wine and eating fancy desserts as they congratulated themselves for betting on the right horse. But, they had, and as irritating as I found them, I did need them to aid in the transition that followed conquest. So, for the next decade or two, I would be stuck with them. After that, my methodology would see them replaced with men and women of substance.
I had to remind myself about it as I held vapid conversations of nothing important, accepting the praise that was heaped upon me. There were even people who thanked me for conquering their planet. I had to remind myself that I was immortal. A decade or two might feel like a long time for me because I was only in my early thirties across both lives, but one day, decades might feel like blinks of the eye.
The banquet was held in the ballroom of my castle, which I had arranged with hologram projectors to make it look like cherry blossoms were falling from the ceiling with exotic fish swimming above the party. Servants ran around, giving out drinks to make sure that people were socially lubricated. The people laughed. They drank. They made small talk. They bragged and complained in equal measures. I was the centerpiece of it all, of course. One of the few downsides of being king.
The whole affair went on for hours before I found myself needing a break. So, after stealing away for a moment, I created a clone and sent him to suffer in my place while I went to have a conversation that actually meant something.
I found Mikasa standing on a balcony alone, staring off into the capital city that was already seeing great renovations being done. The old stone buildings were being torn down block by block, replaced with buildings of glass and steel. I was still undecided on what to do with the Titans dwelling within the walls, but I would need to decide soon. My first thought was to just start moving them to strategic locations around the island, but that felt pretty petty to demand of Ymir and my clone.
"One bad thing about urban development," I announced myself, startling Mikasa as I approached to stand beside her to see the view. Already, some of the buildings going up would dwarf the Walls by the time they were done. "Light pollution. It makes it hard to see the stars," I continued, glancing up. If I channeled a bit of ki to my eyes I could see

them well enough, but there were notably fewer already as I brought electricity and lights to Paradis.
"Is that why?" Mikasa questioned, looking up next to me. "That seems sad."
"Price of progress, sadly," I admitted. Big cities didn't have any particular appeal to me, less so now as a Saiyan, but they were a necessity. Paradis was my capital, and soon enough, the population was going to explode. Two billion would become ten. Ten billion would become a hundred billion. It would need to fully harness the planet and the solar system at large. Untapped nature had its own appeal, but so did the unyielding pace of progress.
"Are you sure you can waste your time with me here? I'm sure they're looking for you at the party," Mikasa questioned, her silver gray eyes sliding over to me.
"That your way of saying you'd like to be alone?" I asked, and Mikasa shook her head as a hand went up to the scarf around her neck. She was dressed in her military attire, a long green jacket with white lilies marking her as a member of the Relief Regiment.
"I was just thinking about a few things," Mikasa admitted. "So much has changed. I feel like I can't even recognize the world sometimes."
"You only knew a small island before, and you barely knew anything about it," I replied. "It's only natural."
Mikasa nodded, a soft smile tugging at her lips. "And now we know that even this world is just a small corner of the galaxy. It makes me feel… small, sometimes."
"Hm. I feel the same," I admitted. That was more true now than ever. A lot of the records on the Attack Ball had been linked to my power level. It was their way of controlling me. Not so much as in forcing me down a path, but understanding Saiyan nature that would have me reading about a strong opponent and going out of my way to fight them. It wasn't a perfect solution, but for most Saiyans, I imagine it would be pretty effective.
But I wasn't most Saiyans. While my progress was nothing compared to the monstrous jumps in power that Vegeta and Goku saw at times, my diligent training had paid off. In terms of building an empire, I was years behind schedule, but in terms of power level, I was massively ahead of the curve. Saiyans didn't train, and there was no promise of a constant string of good fights at your level that you could survive to come back stronger. Meaning, while I didn't have those massive jumps in power, I had more consistent progress to make up for it.
As such, the sealed records had been released for me.
And I got a very good idea of the wider galaxy.
"Galick?" Mikasa started, looking down from the stars and to the scarf around her neck. I could sense the weight of the question on her

tongue, so I gave her my full attention.
"Hm?"
"Why haven't you ever… had sex with me?" Mikasa asked, and the tips of her ears turned red as her scarf. The sight was more amusing than it had any right to be.
"Because you've been in mourning," I answered easily, thinking of Eren. Someone who I killed with my own hands because he had something that I wanted. "Honestly, it's a better question why you joined the Relief Regiment when you were so obviously in love with someone, dead or not."
Mikasa was silent for a moment, genuinely pondering the question. "I don't know," she admitted after a few long seconds. "In the beginning, I just wanted you to help humanity. To kill the titans. Premier Zachary said that it was the best thing we could do to serve humanity at the time."
I nodded, expecting that much. "But you stayed," I noted. Way after it became clear that I was going to do those things anyway. I was never sure what that meant, to be completely honest. As the years passed and the Relief Regiment's duties became more defined and structured, it could just be that she never saw the need to transfer out because she worked in conjunction with the Survey Corp, Military Police, and Garrison when needed. I never approached to ask, and she never brought up the idea of leaving.
"I did," Mikasa agreed. "This place is… kind," she decided after searching for a word. "Everyone feels happy here. The others. The children. It… made it easier to bear my sadness." Her eyes were downcast as she spoke, grasping at the scarf as she brought it up to half cover her face. "But now…"
She trailed off, and I let her gather her thoughts. "Eren wouldn't want me to wallow in my sadness. He would want me to press forward and find happiness again. Even if I have to fight and kill for that happiness. And… lately… I keep thinking that it was… *kinder* this way. That he was gone before he could learn of the humanity beyond the Walls… or the aliens that guard the stars. I think… it would have destroyed him to learn that the cage only grows larger." She had to force some of her words out, almost like she was spitting out poison.
I didn't disagree with her, but I'm unsure how much of that was my guilty conscience talking.
"Are you ready to be happy again?" I asked her outright, turning to face her, and she turned to face me. Her hand lingered on the scarf for a second longer before it fell, dragging the scarf down.
"I want to be," Mikasa confessed as a blush rose to her cheeks and she couldn't quite meet my gaze. "Which… is why I… I would like you… to make love to me." The intensity of her blush grew with every word.

I chose not to respond with words, but to gently lift her chin up with a finger. Hesitantly, Mikasa's gaze met mine, her eyes filled with a jittery nervousness that I didn't associate with her. Then she closed them and lifted her with a gesture of permission. Leaning in, I pressed my lips to hers, and I found them soft and tasting faintly of chocolate and strawberries.
It was a gentle and chaste kiss, but Mikasa melted into it, leaning into me even as she still clutched the scarf in one hand. I pulled her closer, wrapping an arm around her and pressing her body against mine, and, in kind, her other hand trailed up to brush her fingers against my cheek.
Breaking the kiss, a few long seconds later, I had to wipe the smirk from my face when I saw a dazed expression on Mikasa's face. Her fingers went to her lips, as if she were questioning if what had just happened had really happened. I gave her the chance to pull away. To rethink this and end it here. But, when she didn't, with my hand still on the small of her back, I began to float upward towards the top of the castle, and to the balcony of my bedroom.
Setting her down, she looked around and I realized that she hadn't ever actually stepped inside. Usually when she came by it was to grab me when I was with a partner. Her gaze flickered around, looking at nothing in particular -- it was a fairly generic room, honestly. A few full bookcases, a desk that was piled high with papers, a wardrobe, and then finally, an Alaskan King-sized bed for... group activities.
Mikasa's gaze flickered down to the scarf in her hand, and I thought she was going to back out. It was a pretty fair assumption, honestly. But, instead, she gently folded it before she set it down on top of a shelf near the bed. Then she turned to face me. "I don't... I've never..."
"I know," I told her, closing the distance between us. Mikasa was a virgin in the truest sense of the word. I'm almost certain I had just taken her first kiss. My hands went up to her military jacket, and I first undid the belt around her waist and let it fall to the floor. Then, slowly, I undid the buttons of the jacket and pushed it down her body, revealing her more form-fitting white button-down that was tucked into her equally form-fitting pants. "Just let me take the lead, Mikasa. I know a thing or two about this."
"I've heard," Mikasa replied, sounding equal parts embarrassed and dryly sarcastic. She had been spending too much time with Annie.
"So you have. Quick question, how attached are you to that shirt?" I asked her, my hands going to the top button. She blinked at the question, not expecting it.
"Not parti-" she began, only to cut herself off when I dragged a finger down the seam of a button and began to effortlessly tear through them with raw strength and a bit of ki to cut the thread of the buttons.
Mikasa gasped as her shirt was split down the middle, revealing a

cream colored bra and her damn near iconic abs. Her breasts were surprisingly large given her build -- muscle reduced fat, and breasts were fat. I'm going to chalk it up to Ackermann genes making her the perfect woman.
My hands went to her waist, trailing up her curves, and she shivered at my touch. Her uncertainty was pretty adorable -- she didn't know what she should be doing with herself, and her inexperience showed. Not in a bad way, I decided, pulling her white dress shirt off her leaving her top half clad in only a bra. Her hands went to cover herself, mine wrapping around her waist. "You don't have anything to be embarrassed about, Mikasa," I told her, leaning in for another kiss. Copying me, her lips moved against mine while her hands went to my chest, pressing her palms into it before they began to wander to my shoulders, and then my biceps. My hands, however, remained on her waist, letting her get used to being touched as I deepened the kiss. Mikasa gasped when my tongue brushed against her lips, and I knew that she had been talking to the others when she parted them in response. My tongue delved into her mouth, gently exploring it and brushing against hers.
Her breath tickled my cheek while she leaned into the kiss, her breasts pressed against my chest. It was then that my hands began to roam, falling from her waist down to her ass, and she gasped when I groped her with both hands. She broke the kiss and looked up at me, looking downright stunned, and I couldn't help but laugh. "That's just the start. We have a long night ahead of us," I warned her, lifting her up and guiding her to the bed.
I could practically hear her heart pounding as I lay her down on the bed, her hands clasped together as she watched me. She seemed downright puzzled when I leaned back, grabbing her boot instead of immediately ravaging her. It really was a treat. "There's no rush," I reminded her, undoing the laces on her knee-high boot. Taking it off, I then lifted the other leg and did the same to it. Tossing them to the side, my hands began to work their way up her legs, feeling her firm calves and powerful thighs under my palms.
Mikasa's hands went to the belt holding up her pants and undid it. The same for the buttons on her pants before she hooked her thumbs under their waistline and started to shimmy them down. I moved to help her, and together we pulled her pants off leaving her in nothing but her cream colored bra and panties. Now I could confirm that Mikasa was blushing from the tips of her toes to the tips of her ears.
"You're beautiful," I made sure to tell her. I meant it, too. Mikasa had hard and powerful muscles, yet was soft where it counted. Her abs flexed and shifted with every small movement, as did her calves and thighs. Her arms were defined with notable biceps, and I knew that her

back would be no different. Her body was perfected, honed to a razor's edge due to diligent training and her own superior genetics.
She seemed to appreciate the compliment as my hands roamed her legs, shifting where she lay on the bed, and I smelled a distinctly womanly scent from her. She also noticed something, "You're still clothed," she noted in a small voice, her hands clasped over her stomach while her eyes roamed my face and upper body.
In response, I leaned back. Kicking off my shoes was easy with a bit of telekinesis, while I could undo the cloth folded around my waist by removing the golden plated belt. And, as soon as the cloth pooled around my feet, Mikasa's gaze darted straight to my erection that strained against the fabric of my undersuit.
One bad thing about super strength? Kinda hard to hide a boner. Found that out when my dick ripped straight through some denim pants I wore back when I was playing around with human clothing.
It wasn't the first time she had seen it, but her jaw still dropped and her eyes filled with a sense of wonder and apprehension. Grabbing my undersuit at the neck, I peeled it down my body, and her gaze wandered to my body. Her legs closed, grinding her thighs together, watching my cock spring free as I stepped out of the body suit entirely. She swallowed thickly when I once more leaned forward, dragging my hands up her legs and I felt the flesh rise under my palm.
Her breathing hitched when my hands glided over her knees, and up her thighs, venturing dangerously close to her pussy. Her eyes went so wide that there was an honest risk that they could fall right out of her head when I pressed my lips at her inner thigh near the knee. Then I began to leave a trail of them up her thigh. Her breathing grew faster and sharper, until they were quite little gasps with every kiss. I had to swallow a smile when she hissed with disappointment when I passed over her pussy to plant a kiss onto her other thigh.
Which is why she was so thoroughly caught off guard when I leaned forward, grabbing the hem of her panties with my teeth and tearing them off. That was a trick that always worked wonders, and the effect wasn't lost on Mikasa. Reflexively, her hands went to cover herself, but I put an end to that by hooking my hands underneath her knees and pushing forward, making her knees hit the bed while her body was left exposed.
Her pussy was no less beautiful than the rest of her. Her lips were parted, covered in a sheen of arousal, with her clit already drawn out from its protective hood at the top of her pussy. From her current position, I could see every fold, and that was something that Mikasa was keenly aware of. "Ahn, no- that's- Ah~!" A moan ripped from her throat when I dragged my tongue over her pussy from the bottom up. Reflexively, her hands went up to my head, running her fingers through

my hair as she couldn't decide whether she should push me away or pull me in. I made the choice for her, burying my face into her pussy and my tongue lapping at her folds, grinding my tongue on her clit, and delving into her slick tunnel that wept arousal with every stroke of my tongue. Her nectre tasted faintly sweet, and there was plenty of it as Mikasa turned out to be a gusher. Her moans were sweet music to my ears; that the small gasps and noises that she tried to swallow down still managed to escape her were all the encouragement that I needed. Soon, she began grinding her pussy against my tongue with small rolls of her hips, instinctively seeking a little more pleasure to push her closer to the edge. Her breathing grew harsher and more labored the closer she got to her orgasm. Then-

"*Hahhngh*~!" Mikasa moaned, throwing back her head, and if I were human, I'm pretty sure I would be sporting some bald spots from her gripping my hair for dear life.

Her pussy gushed over my tongue, and I lapped it up eagerly, yet some still dripped down my chin and onto the bed. Her legs trembled in my hands, and when I pulled back, I saw her pussy quivering as arousal dripped from it. Planting one last kiss to her clit, I barely let Mikasa catch her breath before I inched forward, leaving a trail of kisses up her abs, and towards her bra. With the same trick, I tore the flimsy cloth, allowing her breasts to spill out from their confines.

Her chest was perfectly shaped -- twin pale orbs in the shape of a teardrop, perky and capped with rosy pink nipples that were hardened with arousal. Sealing my lips over one, Mikasa gasped once more, her hands going to the back of my head while her hand glided over my back. My hands were hardly idle as I took her nipple into my mouth, swirling my tongue over the nub. They went to her ass, which I could now sink my hands into without her pants or panties getting in the way.

It really was unfair. In the years I've been here, I've slept with a *lot* of women. All of them cut from the same cloth as Mikasa -- ODM gear demanded a specific body type that it cultivated through use. Muscular girls weren't uncharted territory for me, and they were an outright preference even before I became a Saiyan. But Mikasa was the perfect blend of powerful muscle and womanly softness that had my cock twitching in place, eager to delve into the depths of her pussy.

But not yet.

Pulling back on her breast so that it left my mouth with a light pop, the nipple now covered in a sheen of spit, I didn't neglect the other, taking it into my mouth while one hand glided up from her glorious ass, over her abs, then to the breast my lips had just vacated. I rolled the nub in my fingers, stroking it and letting Mikasa's noises guide me in what felt best for her.

Mikasa was sensitive, I was discovering, as she was already inching

closer to her second orgasm. I hadn't expected that, but it was fantastic information. I decided to send her over the edge by taking my dick, and letting it rest on her clit. With a slow deliberate action, I drug the underside of my cock over her clit and she gasped in pleasure before she quivered with it once more.

"G-Galick, *please*," Mikasa muttered, her tone just shy of begging and I found that I didn't have it in me to wait any longer. Leaning back, I situated myself between her legs and lubed my cock with her generous pussy. Mikasa was watching me, her eyes wide and her expression one of vague alarm when she saw how big my cock was in proportion to her. Slowly, I pulled back, letting the tip of my cock find her entrance. Then I began to sink forward.

"Ohhnn*nghaahhh*...!" It was fascinating to hear how the moan transformed the deeper I sunk into her pussy along with her expression. The curious pleasure morphed into alarm, then disbelief, and finally awe once I sheathed myself inside of her fully. The walls of her pussy clenched down on me tightly, trying to make me yield, but she couldn't manage that as a human. I gave her a few seconds to adjust to it, and I felt her clenching around me.

ODM gear training took care of her hymen, but she was still a virgin. What I didn't expect was for her to hold out her hands to me, her expression full of tenderness, "I want to kiss," Mikasa breathed, and the request was just so earnest...

I leaned in, pressing my lips to hers, and unlike the times before this kiss was full of passion. Her tongue brushed against mine, her arms wrapping around me as she pulled me close. I lifted her up at the waist, delivering small little thrusts into her that made her breath hitch every single time. It only took Mikasa a few seconds to match my tempo by rolling her hips to greet my thrusts.

Slowly, I began to strengthen my thrusts, filling the room with the sound of flesh on flesh and her muffled moans. Mikasa clung to me, kissing me with an almost desperate need. She held me like she never wanted to let go, and that was why a noise of panic escaped her when I began to pull back. She was reassured when I switched our positions, sitting at the edge of the bed with her in my lap.

With it, Mikasa abandoned all pretense and began to shake her hips like a goddamn master. My hands were on her waist, but it was all her now, filling the room with the sounds of sex. I'm not sure if she realized it, but because of the standing mirror I had, I could see her ass rippling with every powerful thrust she delivered upon my cock, or the growing puddle of her arousal that dripped from my shaft and balls onto the floor.

Mikasa broke the kiss, pulling back to look me in the eyes for a moment, and I saw that they were full of need. A desperation that I

recalled from the manga -- Ymir had identified with Mikasa, seeing that same need for connection. I genuinely hadn't expected to see that gaze turned to me, if I was completely honest. Even now, I expected her to carry a torch for Eren, and that she would for the rest of her life.

She leaned back in, kissing the edge of my lips before delivering them at random across my cheek and down my neck. Her hands glided over my chest, arms, and back as she pressed herself into me like she was trying to make us become one. Then her lips trailed up towards my ear. "Galick. I want a baby," she said, and my cock *throbbed* in the depths of her pussy, nestled firmly against her womb. "I want a family. I want what you've given everyone else. I want to have what they have."

That was probably the single most erotic thing that she could have possibly said, I realized in hindsight, because my hands began to move of their own will. It was only the extreme training that I put myself through to control my strength that I didn't lose myself completely, as she whispered the words into my ear. Lifting her with ease, I began to fuck her onto my cock, making her moan breathlessly into my ear while her pussy fought me with every thrust, but super strength also had its benefits.

My cock throbbed once more, and even though I found that I could last hours in bed, Mikasa was turning me into a minute man as I wanted it. I wanted to get her pregnant. And listening to the need in her voice was down right intoxicating. My balls tightened and Mikasa leaned back, pressing her forehead against mine as she gazed into my eyes, her expression on of bliss.

"Ah~!" Mikasa gasped when the tension in my balls came undone and I erupted inside of her. The surge of cum struck her with physical force, filling her womb to the brim in an instant. Her breathing hitched as she was filled, still staring into my eyes, but only now, there were unshed tears forming in the corners. "T-Thank you, Galick," she breathed, leaning forward and pressing her lips to mine.

Given my track record… yeah. It was fair to just assume that I had already gotten her pregnant. My cock throbbed in her pussy with my balls dumping their contents, determined to knock her up. Her hands cupped my cheeks as she kissed me gently, almost at odds with the passion she showed before.

Once a sigh heaved out of me, feeling lightning race down my spine that I wasn't entirely convinced wasn't the Hallucigenia at work, Mikasa went limp in my grasp, resting her head in the nook of my neck. And, for a second, I just savoured her embrace before speaking. "Are you happy, Mikasa?"

I felt her pussy clench on my still hard cock while she pondered the question.

"I am," Mikasa decided. "Just… please… never leave me?"

I breathed in and said,
"I'll never go where you can't follow. It's a promise."
...

A/N

So ends the Attack on Titan jump of the story. The story was a lot of fun and a pretty big deviation from my usual methods of writing. I wrote the entire thing over the course of a week and a half, just a straight stream of consciousness to paper. It was interesting to see what I could accomplish if I put all of my focus into a single story rather than my usual practice of bouncing around between stories. But with this chapter, it's time to get back to the daily grind of my usual rotation. Starting Monday, my other stories will go back to their normal schedule, and this story will most likely be shelved for the foreseeable future.

That being said, the response to the story has surprised me. So, I think it's safe to put it on the short list of potential stories that'll replace one of my other works when they end, and I'll continue to work on it in my own time.

As for what would come next -- we would have a very brief stay in Demon Slayer before a longer stay in RWBY as Galick works to bring the solar system under his control. Which means some empire building, exploring the implementation of something like Dust, Aura, and Demon Blood across Galick's empire, and covering the development of turning a couple of pre-WW1 planets into space-faring civilizations. I have a little notebook that's been filling up with some ideas on what could happen beyond that point, but after the system is conquered, that would be when the rest of the galaxy really starts to open up.

Until then!